The Ancient Hebrews.

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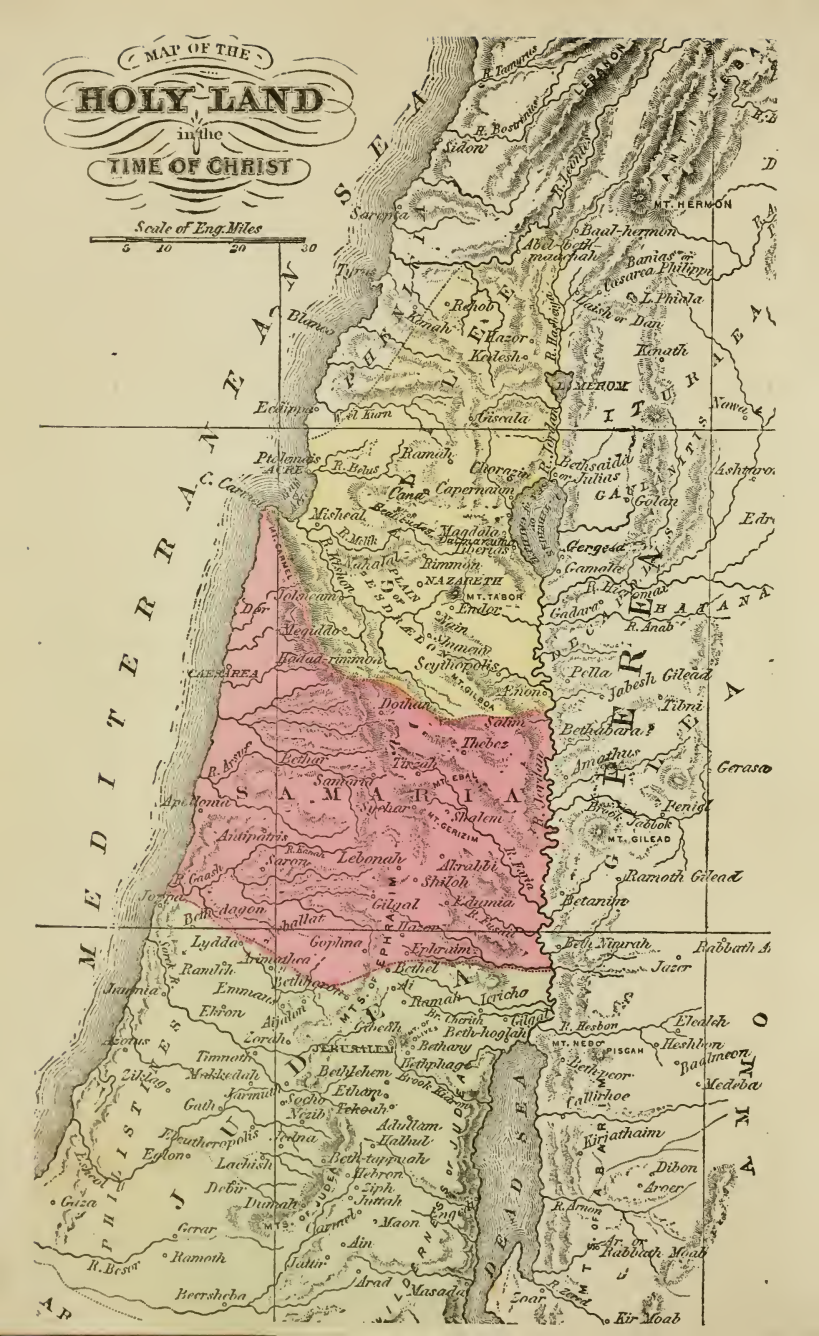
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MAP OF THE
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in the
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Scale of Eng. Miles
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MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PHOENICIA
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Thebez
Tirzah
Samaria
Shechem
Shalem
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MT. GERIZIM
Antipatris
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Jordan
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Baal-hermon
Paneas or Caesarea Philippi
Iesh or Dan
Kedesh
Hazor
Kenath
Nawe
Ijon
Abila
Hippos
Gadara
Anab
Ammathus
Gerasa
Tibni
Bethabara
Penuel
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Rabbath Ammon
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THE

ANCIENT HEBREWS:

WITH

James W. Lord

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

CONCERNING

The World before the Flood.

BY

ABRAHAM MILLS, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF "THE POETS AND THE POETRY OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS;" "THE LITERATURE AND THE LITERARY MEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND," ETC., ETC., ETC.

A. S. BARNES AND COMPANY,
NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

FOR several years the plates of this work were supposed to have been destroyed. But through the effective energy of the author's widow they have been found and prepared with some important additions for renewed circulation. It is not claimed that for general interest it will stand beside Dean Stanley's "Jewish Church," but that for compendiousness, for simple, earnest, truthful exposition, for candor to both Jew and Gentile, for convenience in handling and carriage, for usefulness to the Bible student setting out in his search of the Scriptures, for study in day and Sunday schools of the early sacred history of the world, for beauty of typography and manufacture, it is not excelled. It is particularly valuable by reason of the ten new Charts giving in outline the Chronology of Hebrew history, forming an indispensable means of review, prepared by Professor J. T. Benedict, of New York, for class use. There are also in this NEW EDITION a Map of Palestine in the time of Christ, and a full-page *Cut* showing the sectional plan of the Temple.

1875.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by
ABRAHAM MILLS;
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PREFACE.

THE history of every thing that pertains to the Ancients, is fraught with the deepest interest to all intelligent minds. The lessons of instruction which it imparts, assuming, as they, in no inconsiderable degree, do, the attributes of experience, are, perhaps, more durable than any others that we receive. Imagination carries us back to the period at which the events that we are contemplating occurred; and as the mind becomes, by the influence of ideal presence, identified with them, the scenes with which they are connected pass, in apparent reality, before our view. If this be true in regard to the history of the Grecians, the Romans, and other *profane* nations of antiquity, how *peculiarly* true must it be in regard to the ANCIENT HEBREWS. Here no darkness or uncertainty veils the mind respecting the *truth* of what is recorded; but every thing stands out in bold relief; characters are exhibited as they were: transactions are recorded as they occurred: vice is uniformly detected and punished; and virtue, recognized and rewarded. JEHOVAH himself is the judge; and of the justness of His decisions, no question can properly arise.

In composing the present work, the author has

had these thoughts constantly in his mind; and he has, therefore, aimed, after drawing a general sketch of the history of the world from the creation to the call of Abraham, to give a simple and unambitious narrative of all that transpired in connection with the history of the Hebrews, from the latter event, to the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. To do this the more successfully, he has availed himself of all the aid that he could derive from former writers on the same subject; but his principal guide, as far as *its* narrative extends, has been the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. That narrative closes, however, nearly five hundred years before the final downfall of the Hebrew nation; but, fortunately, we are favored with the continuation of their history, in the authentic, though uninspired, narratives of Josephus of Jerusalem, and Philo of Alexandria. The author has endeavored, throughout the whole work, to blend the most solemn and impressive lessons of instruction, with the pleasures and advantages of historical information; and if this end shall be found to have been attained, the object had in view will be realized. To the public, and especially to the *religious* public, he here presents the result of his labors—conscious that the success of the work must entirely depend upon its intrinsic merits.

New York,

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THE PERIODS OF HEBREW HISTORY.

In the following Table are given the names, terminal dates, and lengths of the periods of Hebrew History, with the corresponding events and personages, according to Usher's system of Chronology.

PERIODS.	*DATES.*	*EVENTS.*	*PERSONS.*	*DATES A.M.*	*LENGTHS.*
I. The Antediluvian Period.	4004 B.C.	Creation of Man.	Adam.	1, or (0)	1656
II. The Dispersion Period.	2348 "	The Deluge.	Noah.	1656	427
III. The Patriarchal Period.	1921 "	Call of Abraham.	Abraham.	2083	430
IV. The Theocratic Period.	1491 "	The Exodus.	Moses.	2513	396
V. The Monarchical Period.	1095 "	The Monarchy.	Saul.	2909	489
VI. The Hebrews in Babylon.	606 "	The Captivity.	Jehoiakim.	3398	70
VII. The Hebrews in Persia.	536 "	The Return.	Cyrus.	3468	205
VIII. The Hebrews in Macedon.	331 "	Battle of Arbela.	Alexander.	3673	185
IX. The Hebrews in Rome.	146 "	Fall of Carthage.	Scipio.	3858	216
X. The Hebrews Dispersed.	70 A.D.	Fall of Jerusalem.	Titus.	4074	1800
	1870 "	Battle of Sedan.	Von Moltke.	5870	

Introduction.

The Creation—The Fall of Man—Its Consequences—Cain and Abel—Their Offerings—The Murder of Abel—The Banishment of Cain—His Settlement at Enoch—The Origin of useful Arts—The birth of Seth—The death of Adam—The Descendants of Seth—The Descendants of Cain—Their Intermarriages—The Consequences—The Mission of Noah—The Ark—The Flood—The Attempt to build the Tower of Babel—The Dispersion—The final Settlement of the Descendants of Japheth, Shem, and Ham—The Longevity of the Antediluvians.

In contemplating the creation of the world, the reflecting mind is overawed by the vastness of the work, and the facility with which it was executed. Four thousand years before the Christian era, the materials out of which the earth was formed were floating in a chaotic state in the region of undefined space through which it now regularly rolls its annual course.

In the brief period of six days, God created not only the globe which we inhabit, but all things, both animate and inanimate, that exist upon its surface, or live within its bosom. Inanimate objects employed Jehovah's mighty power during the first four days of creation, and the remaining two were devoted to the production of things that have life. The seventh day the Creator appropriated as a day of rest, and sanctified it as a Sabbath; and that day, according to the authority of Philo, was thenceforth regularly observed by all the nations of early antiquity as a day of rest and recreation.

Adam, the last and most perfect production of Almighty power, was placed, immediately after the creation, with his

consort Eve, in a garden that God had prepared for their abode, and which abounded with everything beautiful to the eye and delicious to the taste. Eden was probably situated in Armenia, on the river Euphrates; and in that beautiful Paradise, Adam and Eve were permitted to roam at will, and to partake of its delicate and varied productions—

"With one restraint, lords of the world beside."

In the midst of Paradise God planted two trees, distinguished above the rest—the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The properties of the former were probably to sustain, invigorate, and perpetuate human existence; but what the properties of the latter were, is not so certain. Perhaps it was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil to indicate to Adam and Eve the consequences of disobedience should they transgress the divine command, that "they should not eat thereof."

The bliss of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden was as evanescent as it was perfect. Beguiled by the subtlety of the serpent, Eve, notwithstanding the awful threatening of her Maker that, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," partook of the forbidden fruit, and gave of it to Adam, that he might eat, and thus become equally involved with her in the guilt of transgression. The immediate consequences of this deliberate act of disobedience was the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise; but the sin which it involved

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

Though the sin of Adam and Eve was inconceivably great, and their punishment terribly severe, still their offended Creator was not willing to leave them in utter despair; but, looking to the future redemption of their race, consoled them in their outcast state with the gracious promise,

that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

Soon after Adam and Eve left their happy abode in Paradise, Eve gave birth to her first-born son, and as she supposed him to be "the seed of promise," she called his name Cain, which signifies *acquisition*. Within two years from the birth of Cain, Eve brought forth her second son; but as she believed that she had already received the fulfillment of the promise, she held him in so light estimation that she named him Abel, or *vanity*.

In their youth, Cain and Abel began to exhibit those different traits of character which, in their manhood, became fully developed; and in the selection of their future occupations each indulged his peculiar disposition. Cain became a tiller of the ground, and Abel a keeper of sheep; and "in the end of days," which was, doubtless, on the return of the Sabbath, they brought their respective offerings before the Lord. Cain, in the pride of his heart, offered the fruits of the earth, while Abel, in meek simplicity, presented the firstlings of his flock. The rejection of the offering of the former, and the acceptance of that of the latter, so enraged Cain that "he rose up against his brother and slew him;" and afterwards he attempted to conceal the fratricidal act by burying the body of Abel in the earth. God, however, immediately summoned the murderer into his presence, banished him from his father's family, and sentenced him to become "a fugitive and a vagabond in the face of the earth;" but to remove his apprehension of immediate death, he gave to the fugitive a sign of protection, and declared that "whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold."

At this period, the world was one hundred and thirty years old; and though the Mosaic account confines its narrative to that branch of the family of Adam through

which the Messiah was to descend, yet there can be no doubt that the region of country round the original Paradise was then extensively populated. Cain, therefore, as soon as he was expelled from the house of his parents, collected together a band of desperadoes like himself, and removing to the eastward of the Euphrates, finally settled on a plain northeast of the Persian Gulf, in about latitude thirty and a half degrees north, and there built a city, which he called Enoch, after his eldest son.

Enoch is remarkable for being the first city mentioned in sacred or profane history; and, so far as we can now learn, it was the birth-place of the arts of civilized life. Here, to facilitate their trade with the neighboring settlements, weights and measures were invented, and by the genius of Tubal-Cain the art of forging and polishing iron was discovered. Here, too, originated, as the invention of Jubal, the science of music, and Naamah, the sister of Jubal, first produced woolen fabrics by the art of spinning and weaving. But these vast additions to the ordinary comforts of life in no degree improved the moral character of Cain; for he died as he had lived, in hostility to his Maker, and at his death bequeathed, as an inheritance, the fruits of his wickedness to his posterity.

The death of Abel, and the banishment of Cain, plunged Adam and Eve into the deepest grief; for they very naturally supposed that their Maker's promise to them had failed. But to allay their fears, God bestowed upon them another son, whom they named Seth, or *substitute*. After the birth of Seth nothing farther is related of Adam than that he lived eight hundred years—in all nine hundred and thirty—and at his death was buried, according to an Arabian tradition, in the Cave of Machpelah—the same that the patriarch Abraham afterwards purchased as a burial-place for his family.

The descendants of Seth continued, for many years, to dwell upon the plains of Mesopotamia, and were so eminently distinguished for their piety and virtue that they were called the "Sons of God." The descendants of Cain remained in the vicinity of Enoch, and were as noted for their vice and profligacy as the Sethites were for their piety and virtue: to distinguish them, therefore, from the former, they were called the "Sons of Men." The Sethites were by occupation shepherds and husbandmen, and for the greater convenience of cultivating the vine, they took possession of a range of mountains beyond the Mesopotamian plains. This brought them into immediate contact with the Cainites; and notwithstanding God had strictly prohibited all intercourse between the two families, yet the beauty and accomplishments of the daughters of Cain so completely captivated the sons of Seth, that they disregarded the Divine will, and formed numerous marriage alliances with them.

The link between the Sethites and their Creator being, by this act of disobedience, severed, all restraint was at once removed; and in the course of a few generations mankind became so universally corrupted, that, in the emphatic language of Scripture, their wickedness "filled the earth." This dark picture was, however, occasionally relieved by the appearance of such characters as Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah; but their virtuous example not being sufficient to restrain the vicious conduct of the great mass of the race, God at length "repented that he had made man," and finally resolved, should he still, after being suitably warned of his danger, persist in his wickednesses, that he would bring upon the earth a universal deluge, and thus destroy the whole human race.

An effort on the part of Noah to reclaim man from his

sinful ways immediately followed; but, though he preached righteousness to his fellow-men, and, for one hundred and twenty years, urged upon them the necessity of forsaking their sins and working righteousness, still they persisted in their wayward course, until at length the patience of Jehovah became exhausted; and he then directed Noah to build an ark of gopher or cypress wood, and to enter it with all his family, together with such beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, as might be deemed necessary to replenish the earth after the flood should have passed away. The ark was five hundred and fifty feet in length, ninety-five in breadth, and fifty-five in height; and it was therefore abundantly capacious for the purposes for which it was designed.

Noah, according to Josephus, accompanied by his sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham, and their wives, entered the ark towards the end of September, one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years after the creation; and as his grandfather, Methuselah, had died in the beginning of the same month, and his father five or six years earlier, none of his immediate connections, so far as we know, were left behind him to perish in the flood. The rain began to descend upon the earth early in October, and for forty successive days the heavens were shrouded in blackness, and it appeared as though the fountains of the great deep were broken up. During the months of December, January and a part of February, the flood remained comparatively stationary; but in the early part of March the waters began to subside, and continued to retreat into the caverns of the ocean until towards the close of April, when the ark rested upon an Ararat, or mountain peak, probably amongst the Himalahs, between Hindostan and Thibet, in Central Asia. From that time the water continued to subside until the beginning of the following September,

when the dry land appeared; but Noah and his family did not leave the ark until the first of October, having then been confined within its walls a few days over a year.

Immediately after Noah left the ark he erected an altar, and upon it offered a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Almighty for his wonderful preservation during the deluge. With this expression of grateful piety on the part of his servant, God was so well pleased that he entered into a covenant with him, in which he pledged his own veracity that the world should not again be drowned by a flood; and as a perpetual memento of the covenant thus made, he referred him to "the bow in the clouds," the cause of which was well understood by Noah, and the continuance of which he knew must necessarily be coëval with the existence of the earth itself. God, at the same time, extended man's means of subsistence—which had hitherto been confined to the fruits of the earth—to the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and allowed him to appropriate them to his own necessary purposes.

Noah had followed, previous to the deluge, the occupation of a husbandman; and as the cultivation of the vine was one of the first objects to which he now turned his attention, he selected an appropriate spot adjacent to his new abode, and there planted a vineyard. When the fruit of the vine had arrived at maturity, he partook too freely of its juice, and thus became inebriated. While in this condition, and reposing in his tent, his son Ham passed by; and, observing his father's intoxicated state, he first derided him, and then hastened to communicate the intelligence of what he had witnessed to Japheth and Shem. When Noah came to himself, and heard of the unnatural conduct of his son Ham, he, under divine inspiration, pronounced that awful prophetic prediction concerning him,

which so plainly indicated the state of servitude to which his descendants should be reduced, and which was first fulfilled in the person of his grandson Canaan—"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." After the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years, and died 1908 A. C., just two years before the birth of the patriarch Abraham.

Many years before the death of Noah, a branch of his family, conducted by Japheth, Shem, and Ham, left the vicinity of their father's abode, and journeyed *westward* till they reached the plains of Shinaar, on the banks of the river Euphrates. Here, attracted by the beauty of the country, they resolved to fix their permanent abode. With this view, they projected a city, in the midst of which they determined to build a tower, the height of which "should reach the heavens." The motives that prompted the building of this tower, whatever they may have been, were highly displeasing to the Almighty; he therefore, before they had completed their work, "confounded their language," and thus frustrated their design.

The *Dispersion*, which immediately followed the "confusion of tongues," occurred one hundred and one years after the flood; and by this event, those of Noah's descendants who had attempted to establish themselves in Shinaar were divided into seventy different tribes, and used as many different dialects. They, accordingly, sought new and distant settlements, and the leader of each tribe usually bestowed his own name upon the tract of country on which he settled—thus becoming the founder of a nation. In accordance with this arrangement, the descendants of Japheth established themselves in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe; those of Shem, in the country eastward of the Euphrates, embracing a range of provinces on both banks of that river; while the descendants of Ham took posses-

THE CREATION, 4004 B.C.

I. THE ANTEDILUVIAN PERIOD.

THE DELUGE, 2348 B.C.

The numbers (130), (105), &c., denote the ages of the patriarchs at the birth of their sons, (Gen. v. 3-28). To find the date (A.M.) of the birth of a patriarch, add the numbers that precede the name. Example:—Enos was born 235 A.M. = 130 + 105. To find the date B.C. of the same event, subtract the sum of the same numbers from 4004. Example:—Enos was born 3769 B.C. = 4004 — 235.

1 (0) A.M.	130	235	325	395	460	622	687	874	1056	1656 A.M.
ADAM (130)	CAIN. ABEL.	ENOCH.	IRAD.	MEHUJAEL.	METHUSAEL.	LAMECH	JABAL. JUBAL. TUBAL-CAIN.			
	(105) SETH.	(90) ENOS.	(70) CAINAN.	(65) MAHALALEEL.	(162) JARED.	(65) ENOCH.	(187) METHUSELEH.	(182) LAMECH.		(600) NOAH.
4004 B.C.	3874	3769	3679	3609	3544	3382	3317	3130	2948	2348 B.C.

CREATION OF MAN.
THE FALL OF MAN.
BIRTH OF CAIN.
BIRTH OF ABEL.
SETH BORN.
ENOS BORN.
CAINAN BORN.
MAHALALEEL BORN.
MYTHIC AGE IN GREECE. (4004-2348.)
JARED BORN.
ENOCH BORN.
METHUSELEH BORN.
LAMECH BORN.
DEATH OF ADAM (3074).
NOAH BORN.
SHEM BORN (2448).
THE DELUGE.

sion of Palestine, the northern part of Arabia, and eventually of the whole of the continent of Africa.

During the patriarchal age, which we have thus briefly considered, the lives of men were extended to so great a length that all the generations from Adam to Lamech, the father of Noah, were contemporaneous. After the flood, however, their lives began gradually to diminish, though Noah's sons lived to so great an age as to be contemporary with Abraham, the founder of the Israelitish nation. By tradition, therefore, all the information which Moses has given us respecting the antediluvian world might have descended to Abraham without interruption.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE PATRIARCHS.

SECTION I.

ABRAHAM: Ancestry and Birth—Removal to Canaan—Driven into Egypt by Famine—Return and Settlement in Canaan—Separation from Lot—Lot taken Captive—Rescued by Abraham—Abraham congratulated and blessed by Melchizedek—Birth of Ishmael—Birth of Isaac—Abraham commanded to offer up Isaac in Sacrifice—Interposition of the Almighty—Banishment of Hagar and Ishmael—Isaac's Marriage—Death and Burial of Sarah—Abraham marries Keturah—His Death and Burial.

WITH the patriarch Abraham, to whose history we have now come down, originated the Hebrew nation. Abraham was of the line of Shem, and was born in Mesopotamia 1996 A. C. Of his immediate ancestry very little is known; but as he was the appointed medium through which Messiah was to descend, a genealogy of his more immediate progenitors is given. According to this genealogy, Arphaxad, the son of Shem, was born two years after the deluge; and when he was thirty-five years old, the birth of his son Salah occurred. *Eber*, or *Heber*, from whom the name *Hebrew* is derived—the son of Salah—was born when his father was thirty years of age; and in his thirty-fourth year he had a son whom he called Peleg. In the thirtieth year of Peleg's age, the birth of his son Reu took place; and in the thirty-second year of Reu's age, his son Serug was born. Thirty years after, the birth of Nahor, the son of Serug, occurred; and Nahor, in his twenty-ninth year, became the father of Terah, who, when seventy years of age, had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abraham.

Thus it appears that, from the deluge to the birth of Abraham, a period of three hundred and fifty-two years elapsed; and during the whole of that time the length of men's lives gradually diminished, from about four hundred and fifty, to one hundred and seventy-five years.

Abraham's father resided east of the river Euphrates, and as his kinsmen and neighbors were all idolaters, God resolved to remove him from his native country into a land which should become the inheritance of his posterity. Abraham was now seventy-five years old, and had been, for some time, married to Sarah, the daughter of his brother Haran, and sister of his nephew Lot. Soon after, accompanied by his wife, his father Terah, and Lot, he commenced his journey towards the land of Canaan, but did not immediately proceed farther than Haran, or Charran, on the border of Chaldea. At Charran Abraham remained until the death of his father; and being thus relieved of this aged and infirm attendant, he, with Sarah and Lot, resumed his journey towards Canaan. Having at length reached the promised land, and received the divine assurance that it should eventually become the possession of his descendants, he continued to abide there for a few years, though without any fixed habitation, until, at length, he and his companions were driven by famine down into the land of Egypt.

The famine having soon after ceased, Abraham returned into Canaan, and pitched his tent in the plain of Mamre, near the ancient city of Hebron. Meantime the flocks and herds of both Abraham and Lot had so greatly increased that it became necessary for them to separate. Abraham, with his family, remained in the plain of Mamre, while Lot removed to the plains of Jordan, in the immediate vicinity of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot had not resided long in the plains of Jordan before his adopted country

II. THE DISPERSION PERIOD.

The numbers (2), (35), &c., denote the ages of the patriarchs at the births of their sons, (Gen. xi. 10-26). To find the date of any event, add the sum of the numbers that precede the event to 1656, and subtract the same sum from 2348. Example:—Salah was born 1693 A.M. = 1656 + (2 + 35); or 2311 B.C. = 2348 − (2 + 35).

	2348 B.C.	1656 A.M.
THE DELUGE.		
LEGENDARY AGE IN GREECE (1921-1100).		
		1658
ARPHAXAD BORN.	2346	
		1693
SALAH BORN.	2311	
THE OLD EMPIRE OF EGYPT.		
		1723
EBER BORN.	2281	
		1757
THE DISPERSION.	2247	
NIMROD FOUNDS BABYLON.		
ASSHUR FOUNDS NINEVEH.		
	2217	1787
FOHI IN CHINA.		
		1819
MENES FOUNDS MEMPHIS.	2185	
THEBES FOUNDED.		
		1849
NAHOR BORN.	2155	
SHEPHERD KINGS.		
		1878
TERAH BORN.	2126	
PYRAMIDS IN EGYPT.		
INACHUS AT ARGOS.		
DEATH OF NOAH.		
		2008
BIRTH OF ABRAHAM.	1996	
JOB.		
		2083 A.M.
THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.	1921 B.C.	

NOAH { SHEM. (2) ARPHAXAD. (35) SALAH. (30) EBER. (34) PELEG. (30) REU. (32) SERUG. (30) NAHOR. (29) TERAH. (130) ABRAHAM. (75)
HAM.
JAPHETH.

became involved in war with some of the neighboring nations, and in the course of the contest he was taken prisoner. As soon as Abraham heard of the capture of his nephew he armed his dependants, pursued and overtook the victors, and after a severe conflict overcame the enemy, and recovered, not only the prisoners, but the spoils also, which they had carried away with them.

It was on this occasion that Abraham was congratulated by Melchizedek, a distinguished, pious Canaanite, who was not only king of Salem, but priest of "the Most High God," and one of the most remarkable of the numerous types of our Saviour. To him, as a priest, Abraham offered the tenth part of the spoils of his recent victory.

Abraham had now reached the eighty-fifth year of his age; and though he had no doubt that God would fulfil his promise, and give to his posterity the land of Canaan, yet at this advanced age he was still childless. At the suggestion of Sarah, therefore, he took Hagar, her handmaid, as a *secondary* wife—a practice very common at that early period—by whom he had his first-born son, Ishmael. As Abraham now supposed that God's promise of a numerous offspring was to be fulfilled in this son, he naturally felt for him the strongest attachment and the tenderest concern; and under this mistaken idea the patriarch passed the succeeding thirteen years.

At length, however, when Abraham had attained the ninety-ninth year of his age, God appeared to him in a more solemn and impressive manner than ever before, and, under the name of *God Almighty*, entered anew into covenant with him, commanding him "to walk before him, and be perfect." As a sign of the certain fulfilment of the promise already so often repeated, God, at this time, changed the patriarch's name from Abram, or *high father*, to that of Abraham, or *father of multitudes*. Sarah's name

was also changed from Sarai, or *my princess*, to Sarah, or *princess of multitudes*. We may here observe, that Abraham now sustained the threefold character of patriarch, priest, and prince.

Abraham still resided at Mamre, and about a year after the remarkable occurrence just related, Sarah, now in the ninetieth year of her age, gave birth to Isaac, the long-expected son of promise. When the time arrived for the child to be weaned and separated from the immediate care of its mother, Abraham celebrated the event by a sumptuous feast; and in the midst of their rejoicings Sarah saw Ishmael, through enviousness, as she supposed, mocking at his supplanter. This conduct so incensed her, that she insisted on the immediate removal of Ishmael and his mother from the family. The determination of Sarah gave Abraham, who tenderly loved Ishmael, great concern; but God directed him to comply with her request, and graciously assured him, that, though the covenant-blessing belonged to Isaac, still Ishmael also should become great and powerful. Ishmael was, at this time, in the seventeenth year of his age, and after he left his father's home he settled in Arabia, and there became the father of twelve princes, and the head of a great nation. The prediction that "his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him," has been literally fulfilled in the character of the Bedouin Arabs, his descendants.

From the time that Ishmael was expelled from his home and turned into the wilderness, no important event occurred in the family of Abraham, until his beloved Isaac had reached the fifteenth year of his age; but at that period the doting father's faith was put to a trial of unexampled severity. At the command of the Almighty, he was directed to take his son to Mount Moriah, and there present him on the altar of sacrifice as a burnt-offering to

the Lord. No one else was ever required to perform so painful a duty; and yet Abraham, without a moment's hesitation, in the fullness of his faith, led his son to the spot designated, built an altar, bound him, and then stretched him upon it, ready for the sacrifice; but as his hand was raised to strike the fatal blow, it was arrested by an angelic voice, and a ram, caught in a neighboring thicket, was substituted in Isaac's place.

During the subsequent twenty-two years, little variety attended the patriarch's life, farther than that which naturally arises from great increase of wealth; but at the expiration of that time he had the misfortune to lose, in the one hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age, his beloved Sarah; and her death led to the first formal purchase of real estate on record. On this mournful occasion, Abraham felt that he needed for his family, as a burying-place, a surer title to the land than that which arises from precarious possession; and he therefore entered into a negotiation with the sons of Heth for the purchase of the cave of Machpelah, together with the field in which it was situated. For this property he paid four hundred shekels of silver; and in the cave, which was a natural sepulchre, he immediately afterwards buried the remains of Sarah "out of his sight."

Three years after the death of Sarah, and when Isaac was forty years old, Abraham, being desirous of seeing his son settle in life, sent his servant Eliezer to seek a wife for him amongst his own kindred, lest he should marry a daughter of the idolatrous people amongst whom he sojourned. Eliezer's mission was entirely successful; and having returned to his master accompanied by Rebekah, the grand-daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, her marriage with Isaac was immediately celebrated, according to the usual custom of the East.

After the marriage and settlement of Isaac, Abraham himself married Keturah, by whom he had six sons, all of whom, as they grew to manhood, settled east and south of Canaan. At the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, "Abraham was gathered to his fathers," and was buried, by his sons Ishmael and Isaac, in the same cave that had already received the remains of Sarah. This solemn occasion seems to have brought Isaac and Ishmael together for the only time after the latter had been sent away with his mother. Ishmael himself survived his father forty-eight years, and then, in his one hundred and thirty-seventh year, "died in the presence of all his brethren."

SECTION II.

ISAAC: His Character—Birth of Esau and Jacob—Esau barters away his Birth-right—Is farther supplanted by Jacob, who, by a Stratagem, receives the Birth-right Blessing—Conduct of Rebekah on the Occasion—Jacob goes to Padan-aram—His Remarkable Vision on the Way—Serves his Uncle Laban Twenty Years—Marries Leah and Rachel—Becomes the Father of the Twelve Patriarchs—Returns to Canaan—His Reception by Esau—His various Wanderings—Death and Burial of Isaac.

THE life of Isaac was distinguished by very few remarkable events. He was of a meek and quiet spirit, and, like his father Abraham, devotedly pious. Born in 1892 A. C., at the age of forty he married Rebekah, and, in 1832 A. C., twenty years after their marriage, the birth of Esau and Jacob occurred. Though they were twin brothers, yet, as Esau was first born, by patriarchal usage he was entitled to all the honors and advantages of birth-right. These he early sacrificed, however, for the mere gratification of his appetite; for, on one occasion, when grown to manhood, as he returned, fatigued and exhausted, from hunting, he smelled the perfume of a savory dish of pottage

which Jacob had just prepared, and readily consented to renounce his birth-right advantages for the dish which seemed to him, in his exhausted state, so desirable.

Isaac, after having dwelt for many years at Mamre, was finally driven thence by famine to Gerar, a tract of country of which Abimelech was then king. The valley of Gerar being very fertile, Isaac there pitched his tent, and cultivated the land with such wonderful success as to excite the envy and persecution of the native inhabitants. He was therefore compelled frequently to change his abode; but coming at length to Beersheba, or "the well of the oath," he at once resolved to make it his permanent dwelling-place. To encourage him in the purpose he had formed, God now appeared to him, and declared, "I am the God of Abraham, thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake." And Isaac, in deep devotion and pious gratitude to his Maker, "builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord." His princely character was, at the same time, recognized by Abimelech and his chief men, who entered into a solemn covenant of amity with him.

Thus passed the time of the patriarch, his sons Esau and Jacob still dwelling with him, until the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of his age, when, being partially blind, and feeling other infirmities pressing upon him, he determined no longer to delay the bestowment of the patriarchal blessing. With this view, he directed Esau to prepare for him a favorite dish of venison, that by partaking of it his parental affection might be the more strongly excited, and thus prepare him to bestow, the more effectually, his parting blessing upon his first-born son.

Rebekah, happening to overhear this interview between

Isaac and Esau, at once resolved to secure for her favorite son the blessing designed for his brother. She therefore directed Jacob to take advantage of Esau's absence in the fields to obtain the venison, and bring her a kid, which she would prepare in so disguised a manner, that Isaac would not be able to tell the difference between its flavor and that of the venison. She also, in order to render the deception the more complete, imitated Esau's hairiness, by covering Jacob's hands and neck with the skin of the kid, that Isaac, feeling their surface, all doubt might at once be removed that this was his very son Esau. The deception proved entirely successful; the food was eaten, and the following blessing pronounced:—"God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; and blessed be he that blesseth thee." This important event occurred 1761 A. C.

Isaac had scarcely finished pronouncing the blessing of the first-born upon Jacob, when Esau presented himself before him with the dish of venison that he had been directed to prepare; and the scene that followed was full of both terror and anguish. The old patriarch perceived at once that Esau, by the art and cunning of Rebekah and Jacob, had been supplanted; and however much the circumstance might grieve him, the prophetic blessing was forever lost to his favorite son, for whom he had now nothing in reserve but a general benediction. To console Esau, therefore, in some degree, for his irreparable loss, he declared to him, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt

have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

The conduct of Rebekah in this transaction can be justified on no other ground than by supposing that she made he *purpose* of God her guiding principle, instead of his *commandment;* for it must not be forgotten, that before her children were born it had been revealed to her, that "the elder should serve the younger." Jacob, doubtless, justified his part of the deception by supposing that, as he had purchased the birth-right, he was also entitled to the chief blessing.

Esau was so highly incensed against Jacob for thus supplanting him a second time, that he immediately resolved to take his life; but as his father was now old, blind, and otherwise infirm, and his death soon, therefore, to be expected, he concluded to defer the execution of his design until after his burial. The malice of Esau not being concealed from his mother Rebekah, she determined to send her favorite son Jacob for protection, to her brother Laban, at Padan-aram; and in order to obtain Isaac's consent to this measure, she reminded him of the evil consequences that had already resulted from the marriage of Esau with the daughter of Heth. Jacob accordingly departed from the paternal roof, and set out on his journey to Padan-aram. On the setting of the sun, at the close of the first day's journey, he resolved to pass the night where he then was; and finding no house of entertainment near the place, he took a stone for a pillow, anointed it, and lay down to sleep. In the course of the night he had that remarkable dream, or vision of angelic appearances ascending and descending from earth to heaven, which may, perhaps, be regarded as the first direct indication of a special providence over him.

When Jacob awoke in the morning, he called the place

Bethel, or house of God; and he vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I can come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I shall surely give the tenth unto thee." This important transaction contains the earliest direct allusion on record, to a religious vow; the ceremony of anointing a pillar of stone with oil; and, with the exception of the incident in the case of Abraham and Melchizedek, to a tithe of the tenth of our property "as our offering to the Lord."

Jacob arrived at Padan-aram in the eightieth year of his age, and soon after made a contract with his uncle Laban to serve him fourteen years for his two daughters Rachel and Leah. At the expiration of that time, he expressed a desire to return into the land of Canaan; but, having very advantageous terms proposed to him by his uncle, he concluded to remain with him six years longer. At the end of this second contract with Laban, Jacob's wealth in flocks and herds had so greatly increased, that it exceeded that of his father-in-law; and having received the divine command—"Return into the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee; for I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me; get thee from this land, and return to the land of thy kindred"—he at once made the necessary preparations for his journey.

As Jacob approached the borders of Canaan, his apprehension of evil from the hand of Esau became so alarmingly great, that, after offering a fervent prayer to the Almighty for protection, he endeavored to appease his brother's anger by a magnificent present. God had,

meantime, however, entirely changed the feelings of Esau towards Jacob; and instead, therefore, of meeting him in a hostile manner, he welcomed his return with the most marked kindness. In all this, Jacob saw and acknowledged the hand of his Divine Protector. Just before he entered the land of Canaan, and towards the close of his wearisome journey, Jacob pitched his tent at Succoth; but he soon after removed to Shalem, a city of Shechem, within the borders of the promised land. Designing to take up his permanent abode at this place, he purchased a large tract of land of the children of Hamor, and erected an altar to the "God of Israel." Jacob's family and dependents had now become very numerous and powerful. By his wife Leah he had six sons, viz., Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, and also a daughter named Dinah; and Rachel had brought him his best-beloved son, Joseph. By Leah's hand-maid, Zilpah, he had two sons, Gad and Asher; and by Bilhah, the hand-maid of Rachel, he had Dan and Naphtali. The children of these *secondary* wives were not, however, considered equal to those of Rachel and Leah.

Jacob had resided but a short time at Shalem before the unfortunate seduction of his daughter Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor, and the cruel revenge of his sons, Simeon and Levi, upon the Shechemites, compelled him to leave that place and seek a new abode. He therefore determined to remove to Bethel, the place where God first appeared to him, saying to his sons, "Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the days of my distress, and was with me in the way I went." From Bethel, where Jacob's stay was very short, he removed southward towards Bethlehem; and in his way thither one of the heaviest afflictions of his life occurred. His beloved wife

Rachel expired at Ephrath, on the way to Bethlehem, soon after she had given birth to her second son, Benjamin; and, to honor her memory, Jacob caused a pillar to be placed over her grave, which was still remaining in the time of Moses.

During the whole of Jacob's wanderings, his father Isaac, it would seem, continued to reside at Mamre; and as the time of the death of the venerable patriarch approached, his two sons repaired to his dwelling-place, in order to be present at his funeral. Isaac died soon after, at the advanced age of one hundred and eighty. "And he was gathered to his people, being old and full of days and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him"—doubtless in the cave of Machpelah, which had now become the common sepulchre of the family. From this period, the name of Esau ceases to be mentioned.

SECTION III.

JACOB:—Joseph designated as his Successor—Sent in search of his Brethren—Thrown into a Pit—Sold into Egypt—Cast into a Prison—Interprets the Dreams of the Chief Baker, the Chief Butler, and the King—Made Governor of Egypt—The Famine—Its Extent—Joseph's Brethren sent down to Egypt to buy Corn—Their Reception—Joseph made known to them—The eloquent Address of Judah—Joseph's Reply.

FROM the death of Rachel, 1729 A. C., Jacob seems to have placed his exclusive affections upon her two sons, Joseph and Benjamin; especially upon the former, whom he early designated, by bestowing upon him the princely robe, as his own successor in the princely, the priestly, and the patriarchal office. This mark of distinction so incensed Joseph's brethren, that they determined to remove him out of their way; and they, therefore, diligently watched for an opportunity to carry their design into exe-

cution. This opportunity, so anxiously sought for, soon presented itself. Jacob now dwelt in the vale of Hebron; but as that place did not afford sufficient pasturage for his numerous flocks and herds, he sent his elder sons to dwell at Shechem, where he still owned the land which he had purchased from the sons of Hamor. For some reason, however, they soon left Shechem, and removed to Dothan, a considerable distance farther from the abode of their father.

Jacob, not hearing for some time from his absent sons, at length sent Joseph, who was then in the seventeenth year of his age, in search of them; and, as they saw the youth approaching, they immediately resolved to seize the present opportunity for the execution of their wished-for purpose against his life. Reuben, however, opposed their views, saying, "Let us not kill him—shed no blood; but cast him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out their hands, to deliver him to his father again." When Joseph came up to them, instead of saluting him as he, in the innocence of his heart, had fondly anticipated they would, they first stripped him of his robe, and then cast him into a dreary pit.

Believing that he would soon perish, Joseph's brethren, excepting Judah, now threw off all farther care concerning nim; but Judah, having some relentings about what they had done, resolved to save, if possible, the youth's life. While he was reflecting upon the means by which this could be done, a caravan of Ishmaelitish merchants, on their way to Egypt, approached; and as Judah perceived them, he said to his brethren, "What profit is there if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hands be upon him, for he is our brother, and our flesh." To this proposal they all immediately assented but Reuben, who had

withdrawn from the company, probably to devise some means by which to save the life of his young brother. As money was not the object of the sale, the bargain with the Ishmaelites was soon made; the price which they paid for Joseph being only twenty pieces of silver, or a little more than twelve dollars. The next thing was to conceal the crime which they had committed, from their father; and the device to which they finally resorted for this purpose, was, to dip Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid, and send it to Jacob. The old patriarch instantly recognized the coat, and exclaimed, "An evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces, and I will go down into the grave unto my son."

The Ishmaelitish merchants had no sooner arrived in Egypt than the prepossessing appearance of Joseph secured for him a purchaser. He was bought by Potiphar, one of the chief officers of the king's court; and such was the fidelity with which he served his master, that Potiphar soon committed the entire care of his property into his hands. Joseph's prosperity was soon, however, apparently blasted; for an unlawful attachment on the part of the wife of Potiphar to his person, and which he refused to reciprocate, involved him, at once, in disgrace and punishment. Accused to his master by this lewd woman, of one of the basest of crimes, and not being able to prove his innocence, he was cast into prison, and there left to perish. God, however, who, in all his ways had hitherto been his constant guide, was still with him; and, though forgotten by Potiphar, Omnipotent power was still his protector.

Joseph had been but a short time in prison, before the propriety of his deportment recommended him to the head keeper, who entrusted the other prisoners to his care. Among these were two former members of the king's

household—the chief butler and the chief baker. On one occasion, as he entered their apartments, he observed an unusual sadness in their expression; and, upon inquiring the cause, he learned that each had had an alarming dream. The dreams being related to him, Joseph immediately interpreted them; informing the chief butler that in three days he should be restored to his former position in the king's presence; and then meekly added, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon." A very different fate, however, awaited the chief baker; for in three days he was to be hanged upon a tree.

As Joseph had predicted, at the expiration of three days the chief butler was restored to his office, and the chief baker executed; but the former seems to have entirely forgotten the young Hebrew, whom he had left in prison, and he, accordingly, lingered on in his confinement for two tedious years. During all this time God, however, was preparing Joseph for his approaching exaltation; and, to this end, he sent a dream unto Pharaoh, which none of the magicians, or wise men of Egypt, could interpret. This circumstance became known to the chief butler; and remembering his own dream, and the interpretation of it by Joseph, he immediately communicated all the particulars to Pharaoh. The king, therefore, sent for Joseph, and, as soon as he appeared in his presence, said to him, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it." To this flattering remark Joseph, with pious modesty, replied, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

The dream of Pharaoh, though double in its form, was of single interpretation, and was as follows:—"In my dream I stood upon the bank of the river, and behold there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed, and well-favored, and they fed in a meadow. And behold seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. And the lean and ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine; and when they had eaten them, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and behold seven ears came up on one stalk, full and good. And behold, seven ears, withered, and thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them; and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears. And I told this unto the magicians, but there was none that could declare it unto me." To these dreams, Joseph, without a moment's hesitation, gave the following interpretation:—"The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine and the seven good ears are seven years, and the dream is one. And the seven ill-favored kine and the seven blasted ears shall be seven years of famine."—"Behold, there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of the famine following; for it shall be very grievous."

Having interpreted Pharaoh's dream, Joseph proceeded to recommend to the king, the course he should pursue in order to guard against the consequences of the approaching years of famine. He advised him to select some person of wisdom and discretion, and "set him over the land

of Egypt; and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the [produce of the] land of Egypt, in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the fruits of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land, against the seven years of famine, which shall be in all the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through famine." Struck with the wisdom, as well as the seasonableness of this advice, Pharaoh immediately replied, "Forasmuch as God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt."

At the time of this sudden exaltation, which occurred in 1715 A. C., Joseph was thirty years of age; and in order to identify him the more closely with his own people, the king bestowed upon him the Egyptian name of Zaphnath-paaneah, which signifies *revealer of secrets*, and gave him, as his wife, Asenath, the daughter of the priest, or prince of Heliopolis. By this princess, Joseph had two sons, the elder of whom he called Manasseh, which signifies *forgetting*; because, said he, "God hath made me forget all my toils, and my father's house;" and the younger, Ephraim, the meaning of which is *fruitful;* saying, "God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

As soon as Joseph entered upon his important office as governor of Egypt, the seven years of plenty commenced; and he immediately made preparations to lay up in store-houses all the surplus productions of the country, against the years of famine. The quantity of food thus collected, was so great that "it could not be numbered." The seven

years of plenty had no sooner ended, than the famine commenced; and, during the seven years that followed, the drought was so great as to spread, not only over the whole of the land of Egypt, but to extend into the adjacent countries, even to that part of the land of Canaan where Jacob and his sons dwelt. Jacob, in his distress, learned that corn was to be had in Egypt, and he sent his sons—all but Benjamin, whom he detained at home—down thither to buy food, that they might not perish.

Though twenty-four years had elapsed, since Joseph was sold into Egypt, yet his brethren no sooner presented themselves in his presence, than he fully recognized them. He determined, however, to subject them to some severe trials, and thus remind them of the wicked treatment which he had received at their hands. With this view, he charged them with being spies; and, though he supplied them with corn, and allowed them to return home, he bound Simeon and cast him into prison, there to remain until the other brothers should bring down Benjamin into Egypt as evidence of their innocence. When they communicated to their father Jacob all that had happened to them in Egypt, and the only condition on which Simeon could be released, the old patriarch, in the anguish of his soul, exclaimed, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me." But the case was urgent; and to these bitter reproaches of their father, Reuben, therefore, replied, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." Jacob, however, persisted in his refusal, saying, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

But the provision brought from Egypt being at length consumed, and the famine still pressing sorely upon the land, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food." To this request of his father Judah replied, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, 'Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.' If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and bring thee food. But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, 'Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.'" And Israel said, "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" And they said, "The man asked us straightly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, 'Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother?' And we told him according to the tenor of these words. Could we know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'" And Judah said unto Israel, his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me have the blame forever. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time." The pressure of want, and this persuasive speech of Judah, at length prevailed; and Israel said, "Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

When the sons of Jacob, accompanied by Benjamin, again presented themselves before Joseph, he immediately inquired of them, "Is your father well? the old man of whom you spake, is he yet alive?" And they answered, "Thy servant, our father, is in good health, he is yet alive."

And they bowed down their heads and made obeisance." And when he saw his brother Benjamin with them, he asked, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?" And he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son." The sight of his own beloved brother so deeply affected Joseph, that he found it impossible to restrain his feelings; "and he went out and sought a place to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there."

Joseph, having at length composed himself, gave direction that Simeon should be released from prison, and that his brothers should be that day detained to dinner. These simple shepherds were, at first, very greatly abashed in the presence of the governor of Egypt; but the kind and affable manners of Joseph soon removed all restraints, and they conversed with him about their father and their home with the utmost freedom. At length the time arrived for them to depart; but in order to subject them to one more trial before he made himself known, Joseph directed his steward to place, as they were about to start, in the mouth of Benjamin's sack, his own silver cup, and after they had gone, to pursue them, and charge them with dishonesty and ingratitude. Conscious of their innocence, however, they voluntarily offered, should the cup be found among them, that the offender should be put to death, and the rest should remain bondsmen in Egypt. But when, on examination, the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin, the utmost consternation filled every mind; and Judah, at length, presenting himself in the presence of Joseph, addressed him in the following unsurpassed strain of eloquence:

"O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants saying, 'Have ye a father or a brother?' And

we said unto my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.' And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.' And we said unto my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.' And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go again, and buy us a little food.' And we said, 'We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.' And thy servant, my father, said unto us, 'Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.' Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life), it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, 'If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.' Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest, peradventure, I see the evil that shall come on my father."

The effect of this speech of Judah, upon the feelings of Joseph, was so powerful, that he could no longer restrain his emotions; and he therefore cried out, "Cause every man to go out from me." And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard him. And Joseph said unto his brethren, "I am Joseph: doth my father yet live?" And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, "Come near unto me;" and he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, 'Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen; and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee (for yet there are five years of famine), lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither." "And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon

his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them, and after that his brethren talked with him."

A more interesting scene than is here exhibited, it would be very difficult to imagine. The kindness, tenderness, and sincerity of Joseph to his brethren, who had so deeply injured him, is worthy of the highest degree of admiration.

The intelligence of the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt, soon reached the ears of Pharaoh; and he immediately desired him to invite his father and his whole family to come and live in Egypt, and occupy the best of the land. To remove Jacob and his substance thither, the king sent wagons and asses; and when Joseph's brothers arrived in Canaan, and communicated the happy intelligence to Jacob, that Joseph was still alive, and was governor of all Egypt, the news was so overwhelming that the old patriarch fainted; but having soon after revived, he exclaimed, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go down and see him before I die."

SECTION IV.

JOSEPH:—Removal of Jacob's Family into Egypt—Their Reception—Settlement in Goshen—Jacob's approaching Dissolution—His final Benediction upon his Children—His Death, and imposing Funeral—Fears of Joseph's Brethren—Joseph's renewed Promise of Protection—His Death—The Preservation of his Body.

WHEN Jacob had recovered from the effect of the joyful surprise which the intelligence he had received from Egypt, by the return of his sons, occasioned, he immedi ately took his sons, and their wives, and their children, and their flocks and herds, and all that they possessed, and set out on his journey towards Egypt. Reflecting, however, when he arrived at Beersheba, on the southern border of Canaan, that so important a step as the removing

of his whole family into a strange country, ought not to be taken without the sanction of the Almighty, he there erected an altar, and offered a sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the vision of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob:" and he said, "Here am I." And he said, "I am the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

Encouraged by this express declaration of the Divine approbation, Jacob went forward, and when he reached the land of Goshen, in the northeastern part of Egypt, he sent Judah before him to inform Joseph of his arrival. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Joseph, having thus welcomed his father, next gave his brethren particular directions respecting their conduct when they should come into the presence of Pharaoh, and then hastened to inform the king of the arrival of his father; and Pharaoh immediately authorized Joseph to settle his father and his family in such part of Egypt as should be found best suited to their habits of life. The land of Goshen, being rich and fertile, and well adapted to the pursuits of shepherds—having the wilderness in its immediate vicinity—was at once selected by Joseph as the future abode of his father and his brethren.

The Israelites arrived in Egypt in 1706 A. C., and they were at this time, exclusive of the wives of Jacob's sons, over seventy in number.

As soon as Jacob had arranged his household, he was

presented by Joseph to Pharaoh; and the old patriarch immediately proceeded to bestow upon the king his benediction. Pharaoh, struck with his venerable appearance, at once asked him how old he was; and Jacob replied, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Jacob had, at this period, long been lame, and the difficulty with which he moved, together with the heart-desolating calamities, of which he had so frequently been the subject, doubtless caused him to appear much older than he really was.

Rameses, the particular part of Goshen which Joseph selected as the residence of his father and brothers, was the best of the land; and here he amply supplied them with provisions during the remaining four years of the famine. After the famine had ceased, the Israelites continued in the quiet possession of their new abode; and, from the fostering care of Joseph, together with the unusual luxuriance of the soil, both their number and their wealth rapidly increased.

After Jacob had resided in Egypt seventeen years, he began to feel that the time of his departure was at hand; and he therefore sent for Joseph and required of him an oath, that he would not bury him in Egypt, but would carry him, after his death, to the cave of Machpelah; the burying-place of his fathers, in the land of Canaan. He then stretched forth his hands, and crossing them before him, placed the right hand upon the head of Ephraim, and the left upon the head of Manasseh, and then pronounced his dying blessing upon the sons of Joseph, saying, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long to this day,

the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

The last important office of Jacob's life still remained to be performed. Divinely inspired, he called together all his sons, and prophetically declared to each of them the future condition of his descendants, as a tribe and nation, intimating that the moral character of the father should, in each case, be impressed upon his descendants.

Reuben, though the first born, and "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," was still pronounced as unstable as water, and his descendants were not to rise to great excellence or power.

Upon Simeon and Levi, for their treachery and cruelty to the Shechemites, the severe sentence was pronounced, "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Judah, and scatter them in Israel." The last of these predictions was literally fulfilled in the after condition of these tribes; for the descendants of Simeon had no fixed inheritance in the land of Canaan, but wandered about from place to place as itinerant schoolmasters; while the descendants of Levi, being devoted to the priestly office, were divided amongst the other tribes, each of which furnished a certain umber of cities for their abode.

The patriarch's prediction with regard to the future destiny of the tribe of Judah, was rich in blessing; for not only were superior dignity and power to be their inheritance, but from them Messiah was to descend. Hence the prophecy: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

The distinctive features of the tribes of Zebulun, Issa-

char, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, are delineated with equal accuracy. The land of the tribe of Zebulun was to be situated on the sea-coast, and hence they are described as a maritime people having ships and harbors. The tribe of Issachar was to inherit a pleasant land; but they were to be of an abject spirit, and servants of tribute. Hence they possessed no dignity, nor did they produce any distinguished personage. Of the history and character of the tribe of Dan, we know very little; but what is recorded of them, precisely corresponds with Jacob's declaration, "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel." Of Gad, the patriarch declared, "A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." And of Asher, "His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." But the prediction concerning Naphtali is peculiar:—"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."

The benediction pronounced by Jacob upon his beloved Joseph, was fraught, to a greater extent, with temporal blessings, than that pronounced even upon Judah; but then, in a spiritual sense, it was far inferior, inasmuch as out of Judah the Messiah was to come. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands wer made strong by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." By the shepherd and stone of Israel is, perhaps, intended to be indicated, that the Messiah should derive his descent from Joseph through the line of his mother. Of Benjamin the patriarch simply said, "He shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour his prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

Jacob, having finished blessing his sons, charged them, and said unto them, "I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for the possession of a burying-place. (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, and there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.) The purchase of the field and the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth." "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." The death of Jacob occurred, as was before observed, in the one hundred and forty-seventh year of his age, and 1689 A. C.

Joseph was in attendance upon his father at the time of his death; and as soon as he perceived that the spirit of the patriarch had taken its departure, he "fell upon his face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm Israel." The usual period of mourning in Egypt was forty days; but their great respect for Joseph, and their veneration for his father, induced the Egyptians, on this occasion, to extend the time of their mourning to seventy days. When this period had elapsed, Joseph informed Pharaoh of the oath which his father had exacted from him respecting his burial; and the king readily gave him permission to carry the body of his father into the land of Canaan, and bury it with those of his ancestors, Isaac and Abraham.

Jacob's funeral procession was imposing, perhaps, beyond a parallel. All the servants of Pharaoh, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and also all the elders of

Israel, and all Joseph's brethren and their households, except such children as were too young to make the journey, accompanied him on this mournful occasion. "And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and they made a mourning for his father seven days." The people of the land, when they saw this funeral procession, and observed their bitter lamentation, said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians;" and the place thence forth received the name of *the mourning of the Egyptians.* "And Jacob's sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre; and Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father."

And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead they said, "Joseph, peradventure, will hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil we did unto him." And they sent messengers unto Joseph, saying, "Thy father did command before he died, saying, 'Forgive, I pray thee, now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin, for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.'" "And Joseph wept when they spake unto him, and said unto them, 'Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones.' And he comforted them, and spake kindly to them."

Joseph died in 1630 A. C., having survived his father between fifty and sixty years; and during the whole of that period, the prosperity and happiness of the Israelites

was uninterrupted. As the time of his death drew nigh, he called his brethren around him and addressed them, saying, "I die; and God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he swore to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." And he requested the children of Israel to swear, that when they should remove to that land, they would carry with them his bones. "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

THE WEST.

1921	INACHUS.
1900	The Pelasgi (Greece).
1875	BEGINNING OF THE MID. EMPIRE (Egypt).
1850	
1825	
1800	Phoroneus.
1775	Ogyges (Attica).
1750	Apis (Argos).
1725	
1700	Œnotrus led a Pelasgian Colony to Italy.
1675	Menophthah (Egypt).
1650	
1625	
1600	Prometheus and Atlas.
1575	NEW EMPIRE (Egypt).
1550	CECROPS (1550). Cadmus (1550).
1525	Teucer (Troy).
1491	DANAUS.

THE HEBREW SOJOURNS.

CALL OF ABRAHAM, 1921 B.C.

(1921).

ABRAHAM { ISAAC, ISHMAEL.

ISAAC { JACOB, ESAU.

(1706).

PATRIARCHAL LIFE IN CANAAN.

The Exodus took place 430 years after the Promise (Gal. iii. 17; Gen. xii. 1–4); that is, after the Call of Abraham (2083 A.M.). Adding 430 to 2083, we have 2513 A.M. for the date of the Exodus; and subtracting 2513 from 4004, there results 1491 B.C. for the same date.

The Hebrew Patriarchal Period, from Abraham to Moses, corresponds very nearly, in time, to The Pelasgic Dynasty of the Inachidæ at Argos in Greece, which began with Inachus and ended with Pelasgus, a contemporary of Danaus and Moses.

LEVI. KOATH. AMRAM. MOSES.

JUDAH. PHAREZ. HEZRON. AMRAM.

PATRIARCHAL LIFE IN EGYPT.

(1491).

THE EXODUS, 1491 B.C.

THE EAST.

1921	ABRAHAM. Chedorlaomer. Lot.
1900	Ishmael born (1910).
	Sodom destroyed.
1875	Isaac born (1896).
1850	
	Esau born (1836).
1825	
	Abraham died (1821).
1800	
1775	
1750	
	Joseph sold (1728).
1725	
	Jacob goes to Egypt (1706).
1700	
	Death of Jacob (1689).
1675	
1650	
	Death of Joseph (1635).
1625	
1600	*BONDAGE*
1575	Birth of Aaron. Birth of Moses (1571).
1550	*IN*
	Moses in Midian (1531).
1525	
	EGYPT.
1491	MOSES (1491).

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE LEGISLATOR.

SECTION I.

Moses:—Birth and Education—Retirement to the Land of Midian—Marriage and Dwelling in that Country—Call to deliver the Hebrews from Bondage—Directed to associate Aaron in the Commission—They make known the Mission to the People—Appear before Pharaoh—Exhibition of their Miraculous Power—Successive Miracles—Departure of the People from Egypt—Passage of the Red Sea—Song of Triumph.

Some years after the death of Joseph, a new dynasty was introduced to the throne of Egypt, and the Pharaoh who then reigned "knew not Joseph," nor recognized the benefits which the country had derived from his wise administration. Observing that the Israelites were an entirely distinct people from the Egyptians, and that their yearly increase was beyond all comparison, he became alarmed, lest they should eventually seize upon the supreme power, and especially "lest war should fall out, and they should join with the enemy." He therefore called his counsellors together, to devise some means by which to check the rapid increase of the Hebrews. Various schemes were recommended for this purpose; and the one which was finally adopted, would have proved effectual, had it been perseveringly executed. This was, to drown every Hebrew male child, immediately after its birth, in the river Nile. This law, it seems, was, for some time, strictly observed; but for how long, is not known. At this critical period the birth of Moses, the future deliverer of the Israelites from their bondage, occurred.

Moses was the son of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi, and was born 1571 A. C. His parents had two other children, older than himself; Miriam, his sister, and his brother Aaron. Moses, at his birth, was exceedingly fair, and his mother was, therefore, the more anxious to preserve his life, and save him from falling under the cruel edict of the king. With this view, she concealed him in her own house for three months after his birth; but when, at the expiration of that time, she found she could evade the royal spies no longer, she constructed an ark of bulrushes, placed him carefully within it, and then trusted the precious venture to Almighty protection. The event proved that the trust was not in vain. Miriam, his sister, who had been purposely concealed to watch the fate of the infant, soon observed the daughter of Pharaoh and her female attendants approach the stream. The attention of the princess being immediately attracted towards the frail vessel, she caused it to be brought to the bank of the river; and when she beheld the beautiful face of the weeping child, her natural sympathies prevailed over her prejudices, and she resolved, though aware that it was a Hebrew child, to save its life. At the suggestion of Miriam, who had, doubtless, received her lesson from her mother, and had now mingled in the group around the little ark, a Hebrew nurse was called to take charge of the infant; and thus, by the manifest overruling of Providence, Moses, under royal protection, was re-committed to the care of his own natural mother.

How long Moses remained in the house of his parents, is uncertain; but it is evident that, though early removed to the court of the king, and there educated as heir apparent to the crown, his intercourse with his own people was continually kept up. Though in the king's court, and honored as the royal heir, still his sympathies were all

with his oppressed kindred; and on one occasion, when he saw an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, his indignation became so powerfully excited that he slew the Egyptian on the spot. On the following day, as he was walking out, he observed two of the Hebrews striving together; "and he said to him that did the wrong, 'Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?' And he said, 'Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?'" Alarmed thus, to discover that the transaction of the previous day was publicly known, and fearing lest the intelligence should reach the king, and his own life be taken in return, Moses, now in the fortieth year of his age, left the land of Egypt, and took refuge with Jethro, the wise and pious priest or prince of Midian, a district in the southern part of Arabia. After having remained some time as Jethro's guest, Moses entered into arrangement with him to take charge of his flocks; and by his wise and upright conduct he so thoroughly ingratiated himself in his favor, that the prince bestowed his daughter Zipporah upon him in marriage. By this princess, Moses had two sons, the elder of whom he called Gershom, which signifies *a stranger here;* and the younger, Eliezer, or *the Lord is my help.*

In the land of Midian, Moses passed forty years in great retirement and seclusion from worldly care; but not in idleness; for during the whole of that period he was the faithful keeper of Jethro's flocks. The time, however, had now arrived for Israel's oppressions to cease; and as Moses was watching his flocks near Mount Horeb, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned in the fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight why the bush is not burned.' And when the Lord saw

that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses;' and he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Moreover, he said, 'I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt.'"

This extraordinary manifestation and commission greatly alarmed Moses; and willing to excuse himself from undertaking so arduous a task, he said to the Lord, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the people of Israel out of Egypt; and what shall I say unto them?' And God, to encourage him, replied, "Say unto them I AM THAT I AM, hath sent thee." But Moses, still reluctant to go, began to use argument with the Almighty, saying, "I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." "And the Lord said unto him, 'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now, there-

fore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what to say'" Moses' pleadings and reasonings having all thus failed, he now began to supplicate that the commission might be transferred to another, saying, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

The patience of God with Moses had hitherto been wonderful; but now, the anger of the Lord was kindled against him; and he said, "Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be unto thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be unto him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

Thus divinely commissioned, Moses took leave of his father-in-law, Jethro, and went immediately on his way to Egypt; but before he reached that country his brother Aaron met him, and accompanied him thither. Having entered Egypt, they at once gathered the elders of the children of Israel together; and, after having communicated the message which God had sent to them, they, in confirmation of their commission, exhibited the miracles which Moses had been directed to perform. "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their afflictions then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Moses and Aaron next presented themselves before Pharaoh, taking with them the wonder-working rod, that they might exhibit before the king the miraculous power

with which they had been endowed. God had instructed them to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my first-born; let my son go, that he may serve me; and behold, if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born." This communication seems to have both surprised and angered the king; and he therefore replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." They then informed the king that the God of the Hebrews had met with them, and required that the people should go out into the wilderness and sacrifice to him. To this the king replied, "They be idle, therefore they cry, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Let more be laid upon them, and let them not regard vain words."

Perceiving the disposition of Pharaoh, and his determination not only to retain the Israelites in Egypt, but also to increase their burthens, Moses, under divine guidance, now commenced the performance of a series of miracles in the king's presence, and the infliction of a succession of plagues upon the land, that had hitherto had no parallel in the history of the world. All these, however, Pharaoh resisted, until, at length, the contest between the Almighty and the impious king reached its crisis. Moses, therefore, informed the people that, at about midnight, the Lord would go forth into the midst of Egypt, and would slay all the first-born in the land of Egypt, "from the first-born of Pharaoh on the throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant that sitteth behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts: but that against the children of Israel not a dog should move his tongue—against man or beast." Accordingly, at the appointed time, "the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." This infliction of divine wrath had the desired effect; and

Pharaoh at once gave orders that Moses, Aaron, and all the people of Israel should depart from Egypt. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for, they said, "We be all dead men."

It was on this awfully impressive occasion that the Jewish passover was instituted, as a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the desolating plague which fell upon every house of the Egyptians. The sign of this deliverance was the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb on the door-posts of the house of each Hebrew family. This passover was to be celebrated annually, on the same day of the month in which it was instituted; that all the Israelites, by families, should partake of it; but that no stranger should be admitted, until all his males were circumcised. They were also directed, should their children inquire, after they were settled in the land of Canaan, "What mean you by this service?" to say to them, "This is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

The Israelites, in 1491 A. C., having left Rameses, in Goshen, marched to Succoth, and there, for the first time, stretched their booths. The number of men at this time in the camp, capable of bearing arms, was six hundred thousand; and if to these be added the women and children, the whole number of souls that escaped from Egypt must have exceeded three millions. Moses here remarks that the sojourning of the children of Israel had been four hundred and thirty years; but this, it must be remembered, included the whole period that elapsed from the calling of Abraham to the time when the Israelites finally left Egypt. The four hundred years of their bondage, so often mentioned in the Scriptures, commences with the birth of Isaac,

1892 A. C.; and the time during which the people actually dwelt in Egypt, was from 1702 A. C. till 1491 A. C., two hundred and eleven years. From Succoth the Israelites marched to Etham, on the borders of the wilderness; and thence they went southward to the Red Sea—God graciously preceding the camp in a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day.

In the mean time, Pharaoh and his people, having recovered from the consternation into which the death of their first-born had thrown them, resolved to pursue the fugitives, and force them back again into bondage; and when the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were pursuing them, they became greatly alarmed, and, in their fear, cried unto the Lord. But Moses, in the fullness of his faith, said unto the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day; for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea. And I, behold I, will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them, and I will get me honor on Pharaoh, and upon his host, and upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.'"

Moses, in accordance with the divine command, stretched forth his rod, and the sea immediately divided and left a pathway through which the Israelites passed on dry land; but when the Egyptians attempted to follow them, the waters returned to their bed, and the whole Egyptian host was immediately overwhelmed and perished. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyp-

tians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses."

It was on this occasion that Moses composed the celebrated ode, or *Song of Triumph*, found in the first twenty-one verses of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. This is the earliest poem of which we have any knowledge; and it abounds with those sublime and lofty expressions which so important an occasion would naturally elicit. "And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And they sang the song which Moses had composed, and accompanied it with their instruments."

SECTION II.

MOSES:—The Wilderness of Sin—Distress for Want of Water—Manna given them for Bread—The Sabbath—The Pillar of Cloud—The Rock of Horeb—The Victory over the Amalekites—Vicinity of Mount Sinai—Visit of Jethro—His Reception—Advises the Appointment of Assistant Judges.

THE Israelites, being thus delivered from their cruel oppressors, immediately commenced their journey through the wilderness of Shur, which lay adjacent to that part of the Arabian coast of the sea through which they had just miraculously passed. But during the first three days of their journeyings in this barren and sterile land, they found no water; and forgetting, in their distress, all the recent interpositions of God in their favor, they began to murmur against Moses, and to cry out, "What shall we drink?" At length, however, they discovered a pool near the camp; but when they came to taste the water, they found it bitter, and hence they bestowed upon the place the name of

Marah. To sweeten this water, and to render it palatable, God directed Moses to cast into the pool the branches of a tree which grew adjacent to it; and the thirst of the people being now allayed, they left Marah and marched to Elim, where, finding twelve wells of water and many palm-trees, they rested for a number of days.

Having remained at Elim until the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites left that place and commenced their march through the wilderness of Sin towards Mount Sinai. While resting in the midst of this wilderness, the provisions which they had brought with them out of Egypt became exhausted; and as they began to be in want, they murmured against Moses, and even reproached him for having brought them away from the flesh-pots of Egypt. Under these trying circumstances, Moses had recourse to the Almighty for deliverance; and it was on this occasion that that miraculous supply of *manna* from Heaven commenced, by which they were daily sustained during the whole of their forty years sojourn in the wilderness. This manna was white, and, in appearance, like coriander seed; and its taste was like that of wafers made of honey. In imparting this food, in answer to the prayer of Moses, the Lord said, "I will rain bread from Heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day; that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or not. And it shall come to pass, on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

In this passage, we have the first direct intimation found in the Scripture, of the observance of the Sabbath, after its institution; and as there was nothing in the circumstances of the people at that time, which can be assigned as a reason for setting apart the seventh day of the week

as a day of rest, the inference is irresistible, that the observance of the Sabbath was a matter with which the Israelites were already entirely familiar. To add to the impressiveness of this occasion, and to overawe the people and reprove them for their wicked murmurings, *The Glory of the Lord* appeared in the midst of the pillar of cloud that overhung the camp. This "Glory of the Lord" was, probably, nothing less than a visible manifestation of our blessed Saviour, the Son of God.

Leaving the wilderness of Sin, the Israelites journeyed toward Mount Sinai; but when they arrived at Rephidim, in the vicinity of Mount Horeb, one of the elevations of the Sinai range, they were again greatly distressed for want of water; and on this occasion, in their wicked murmurings they went so far as to express a distrust in God's precious promise of care and protection, and impiously to taunt Moses with the significant inquiry, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Moses, in this emergency, as in all the trying circumstances under which the repeated rebellions of the people so often placed him, had immediate recourse to the Lord, and crying unto him, said, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." God, in reply to the earnest entreaty of his faithful servant, directed him to take with him the elders of Israel, and go and stand on the rock of Horeb, and smite the rock with the rod with which he had smitten the river of Egypt when its waters were turned into blood. Moses, in accordance with this direction, smote the rock with his rod, and the waters gushing forth from several points at once, united in a stream below, and flowed down into the camp at Rephidim. The people being thus miraculously supplied with water, their rage against Moses ceased; but to preserve the remembrance of their wicked mutiny and distrust of God, the place was thence-

forth called *Massah* and *Meribah*, the former of which signifies *temptation*, and the latter *chiding*.

Soon after this miraculous display of divine power, and while the Israelites were still encamped at Rephidim, they were thrown into the greatest consternation by the sudden and unexpected approach of an army of Amalekites. These Amalekites afterwards inhabited the southern part of the land of Canaan, but where they at this time dwelt is uncertain. After brief reflection, Moses ordered Joshua, who was thenceforth his constant attendant, but who is here mentioned for the first time, to draw out a party of the choicest men in the camp, and early in the following morning to give the enemy battle. Joshua did as Moses commanded him; and in order to witness the conflict, Moses, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, ascended a neighboring eminence. Directed by the Almighty, Moses took with him his rod, and, during the battle, so long as he held it up, the Israelites prevailed; but when, through weariness, his strength to keep the rod elevated began to fail, the Amalekites had the advantage. Aaron and Hur, perceiving this, seated Moses upon a stone, and placing themselves upon either side of him, supported his hands, in one of which was held the rod, while the other was upraised in supplication to God. In this posture Moses was sustained until the going down of the sun, by which time the Amalekites were completely routed, and all of them put to the sword.

The Israelites were greatly encouraged by this signal success in their first martial enterprise; and that the remembrance of so remarkable an action might be preserved, God commanded Moses to make a record of it, that Joshua, the general, might thereby be animated in his future services, and be led to trust, in all his conflicts with the enemies of Israel, alone in the same Almighty

arm through whose aid he had gained this important victory. As a memorial of this great triumph, Moses erected an altar on the spot, and offered sacrifices of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord—calling it *Jehovah Nissi*, which signifies *The Lord is my Banner*—a fit device to be inscribed on the standard of Joshua, who was thenceforth to be the instrument of the Almighty in overcoming and dispersing all those nations that should oppose the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

Soon after the defeat of the Amalekites, the Israelites left Rephidim and proceeded towards Mount Sinai, where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and near to which Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, resided. Jethro, having already received partial intelligence of the wonderful displays of Divine power in favor of Moses and the people of Israel, and learning that they were now in the vicinity of his own abode, took his daughter Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and her two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and with them repaired to the Israelites' camp. His reception was of the most gratifying character; and after mutual salutations and embraces, Moses gave him a particular account of everything that had occurred during his absence. With the narrative of Moses, Jethro was so deeply affected, that at its close he exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them." This interesting interview between Moses and Jethro was closed by a public sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, which was followed by great festive rejoicings.

Jethro had been but a short time in the camp of Israel, before his attention was attracted to the pressure of busi-

ness which the hearing of the complaints. and the determining of the differences of so great a body of people, imposed upon Moses; and, therefore, being himself a man of wisdom and experience, he advised him to appoint certain subordinate officers, who should be properly qualified for their respective positions—men of sincerity and ability, such as feared God and hated covetousness—to be rulers; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens; whose province it should be to hear and determine all trifling disputes among the people, but to refer the greater and more weighty matters to himself, as their chief ruler. This salutary advice of Jethro, being highly approved by Moses, he immediately put it into practice, and soon found it attended with the happiest results. Jethro soon after took his departure, and the Israelites moved on towards Mount Sinai, and encamped in the wilderness at its base.

SECTION III.

MOSES:—Message of God from Mount Sinai—Its Reception—Moses ascends the Mount, and receives the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments—Receives other Laws also, and Directions for building the Tabernacle—The Consequences of his Long Absence—The Worshiping of the Golden Calf—The Indignation of Moses, and the Punishment inflicted—The Tabernacle and its Utensils consecrated—Death of Nadab and Abihu.

THREE months had now elapsed since the Israelites left Egypt; and the Almighty immediately summoned Moses to come up to him in the Mount, and charged him to deliver at once to the children of Israel the following message: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure

unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Moses, having descended from the Mount, called the elders and the people of Israel together, and communicated to them the message of the Lord; which they no sooner heard than they at once exclaimed, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." We shall see in the sequel, however, how little regardful they were of this solemn promise.

The Almighty next commanded Moses to direct the people to cleanse and purify themselves for two days, as, on the third day, he should come down upon the mountain and make a covenant with them. He likewise strictly charged him to set boundaries about the foot of the mount, which none should presume to pass under the penalty of death. These orders were strictly observed, and every preparation made in conformity to the Divine command. On the third day, early in the morning, the people having approached the mountain, saw it covered with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded such dreadful peals of thunder, and such dazzling flashes of lightning, as filled them with the utmost terror. In the midst of this awful scene, the trumpet was heard to sound louder and louder, and the noise of thunder and the flashes of lightning became more frequent and violent. Suddenly, however, the most solemn silence prevailed; and, after a brief pause, the Almighty, from the midst of the fire and smoke, pronounced, in the hearing of all Israel, the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments. These commandments were soon after inscribed by God himself upon two tables of stone, and delivered to Moses to be preserved as the basis of all moral law.

While Moses was in the midst of the mountain, in intercourse with the Almighty, he received, in addition to the

Decalogue, many other laws, both ceremonial and political, the design of the whole of which was to preserve the people in their obedience to God; to prevent them from intermixing with other nations, and to advance their general welfare, by securing to each individual the quiet enjoyment of his life and property. These laws Moses immediately communicated to the people, after which he offered sacrifices to God, and caused twelve pillars to be raised near the altar, to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. He then led Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, with seventy elders, beyond the camp, and nearer to the mountain, the base of which they had no sooner reached than an indication of the Divine Presence was manifested to them. Here, having first committed to their charge the care of the people, he left the elders, and, accompanied by Joshua only, approached still nearer to the mountain-peak. Alone ascending to its very summit, Moses soon found himself enveloped in a thick cloud, from which the glory of the Lord shone forth like a devouring fire.

In the midst of the cloud, and in audience with the Deity, Moses remained for forty days, during which he received from God, besides many other instructions, specific directions for the building of the Tabernacle, wherein divine worship should be performed. These instructions embraced a description of the form of the sanctuary, the table of shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar of burnt-offerings, the court of the Tabernacle, the Basin, the Ark, the Candlestick; and all the other sacred utensils. They included also directions for the form of the sacerdotal vestments, and the manner in which the priests were to be consecrated—what part of the oblation was to be taken, and how the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. The two principal men to be employed in the building of the Tabernacle, were, Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and

Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. Having completed these instructions, and enjoined a strict observance of the Sabbath, the Almighty gave to Moses the two tables, on which were written the Ten great Commandments to which we have already alluded.

But the long absence of Moses from the camp, was attended with consequences which he had little anticipated. The people, supposing that he had been destroyed, assembled in a riotous manner about Aaron's tent, and demanded of him new gods to go before them. Extraordinary as this demand was, yet such was the weakness of Aaron that, instead of expostulating with the people, and rebuking their sin, he tamely complied with their request, and even contributed to their idolatry. He induced them to collect all the golden ear-rings of their wives and children, and these he constructed into a molten calf, in imitation of the god Apis, of the Egyptians. When the thoughtless Israelites saw this image, they were so well pleased, that they, with one voice, exclaimed, "This is thy God, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" and when Aaron witnessed the satisfaction with which the people received this golden god, he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a solemn feast to be held on the following day. But it proved rather a feast of luxurious revellings, than one prompted by religious motives; for, after they had presented their oblations and peace-offerings, they turned to feasting, dancing, and other riotous indulgences.

The omniscient eye of the Almighty no sooner beheld these wicked and idolatrous proceedings in the camp of Israel, than his wrath was so highly kindled against them, that he at once resolved to destroy the whole race; and hence he said to Moses, "Go, get thee down, for thy people, whom thou broughtest out of Egypt, have corrupted

themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people, therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentment in their destruction; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended for them, and of thee will I make a great nation." Alarmed at the prospective overthrow of his beloved people, Moses at once prostrated himself before the Lord; and, though conscious of their great wickedness, yet so sincere and fervent were his prayers and intercessions on their behalf, that the Almighty was pleased, for his sake, to mitigate the severity of their punishment.

When, however, Moses had descended from the mountain, and approached the camp, he saw the golden calf, and the people dancing before it; and so greatly was his own indignation enkindled at the sight, that he immediately cast the tables of stone, which he bore in his hands, upon the ground, and broke them into pieces: he then caused the calf to be ground to powder, and mixing the dust with water, compelled the people to drink it. He also upbraided Aaron, with the utmost severity, for the part he had taken in this wicked rebellion; and then, advancing into the midst of the camp, he directed the sons of Levi, none of whom had been concerned in the revolt, to go through the camp and slay all the ringleaders of this idolatrous defection, without respect to age or quality, friendship or consanguinity. The Levites strictly obeyed the orders of Moses, and the number slain on that day was about three thousand.

This severe punishment spread terror through the whole camp; and on the following day Moses, in the most solemn manner, reminded the people of their ingratitude and folly, but at length promised that he would go again up into the mountain, and if possible, by his intercessions, avert such farther punishment as they might still deserve. Moses,

in accordance with this promise, returned to the mount, acknowledged before the Lord the great sin of the people, and through the earnestness of his concern for their preservation, so far obtained reconciliation for them, that the Lord was pleased graciously to promise, though, in consequence of their rebellion, his *immediate* presence should be withdrawn from them, yet he would still send his angel before them, to drive out the heathen from the promised land, that he might perform the oath which he had made to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After this comparative reconciliation, the Almighty commanded Moses to prepare two other tables of stone, like those which he had broken, and to come up alone with them, in the morning, into the mount, "and I," said he, "will write in those tables the words that were in the first."

After again remaining forty days in the mount, in communion with the Deity, Moses descended, bringing with him the two tables of the law; but by the long converse he had now held with God, his face had acquired such a lustre that the people were not able to approach him; and, therefore, whenever he addressed them he was compelled to cover his face with a veil. His first and most important communication to the people was, that it was the Lord's will to have a Tabernacle built, for the performance of religious worship; and that he had commanded him to direct them to bring in their free-will offerings for the accomplishing of the work. These offerings were to be entirely voluntary, and so desirous were the people to make some atonement for their recent sins, that they soon brought in more than was requisite; insomuch that Moses was compelled to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their farther liberality.

The Tabernacle was divided into two parts—a large open Court, and the *Tabernacle proper*. The court was a

hundred cubits long and fifty cubits broad. It was inclosed and hung round to the height of five cubits, with curtains of fine twined linen. These curtains were suspended by silver hooks, on fifty-six pillars of brass, or of wood overlaid with brass, filleted with silver, and set in large brass sockets. The only entrance of this court was from the east, by a hanging veil of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of needle-work, twenty cubits in length, and suspended on four pillars. Here, under the open sky, stood the altar of burnt-offerings, and the brazen basin; and hither every clean Hebrew, or proselyte of the covenant, might come with his offering.

At the west end of the court stood the Tabernacle proper, which was a close tent, somewhat in the form of an ordinary dwelling-house. It was thirty cubits long, a little over ten cubits broad, and of the same height; and was reared with forty-eight boards of wood, each a cubit and a half broad, and overlaid with gold. These boards were set upright in ninety-six large sockets of silver, and were supported behind by five cross-bars of wood, overlaid with gold, and fastened to the boards with golden rings. On this frame was suspended a four-fold covering. The first cover consisted of the curtains of fine twined linen, with blue, purple, and scarlet, overlaid with figures of cherubims of exquisite workmanship. Each curtain was twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits broad, and they were all coupled together by loops of blue, and hooks of gold. The second covering consisted of eleven curtains of goats' hair, coupled together with hooks of brass. The third covering was made of rams' skins dyed red; and the fourth, of string-leather, or badger-skins.

The entrance to the Tabernacle, immediately before which the brazen altar and the basin stood, embraced the whole eastern end. It was overhung with a veil of blue,

purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, curiously embroidered, and suspended by golden hooks, on five pillars of wood, overlaid with gold, and set in large sockets of brass. The gold employed about the Tabernacle amounted in value to about seven hundred thousand dollars, and the silver, to not far from seventeen thousand five hundred. The sanctuary of the Tabernacle was divided into two apartments, the first of which was twenty cubits long, and was called the *Holy place:* into it the priests only were allowed to enter. At the inner extremity stood the golden candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread; and here the silver trumpet and the standards of weights and measures were kept. Beyond this was another apartment, ten cubits square, and separated from it by a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubims elegantly wrought, and suspended by golden hooks, on five pillars of wood, overlaid with gold, and set in sockets of silver. This apartment was called the *Holy of Holies;* and here, amidst profound darkness, were deposited the Ark of the Covenant, overshadowed by the cherubim, between which hovered the Shechinah, or Cloud of Divine presence; and here, also, were the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the Law. None but the high-priest could approach this sacred apartment, and he was allowed to enter it but once a year.

The Tabernacle being thus, in 1490 A. C., completed, it was set up on the first day of the second year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and was immediately consecrated, with all its utensils, and dedicated to the sacred purposes for which it was designed. Aaron was constituted high-priest, and the priestly office was settled upon his posterity, though the whole tribe of Levi was devoted to the service of the Tabernacle. On the

eighth day after his appointment as high-priest, Aaron offered before the Lord his first burnt-offering; and with this pious expression the Almighty was so well pleased that he caused fire to descend from Heaven upon the altar, and consume the victim in the presence of the whole congregation.

The fire thus miraculously kindled, was, by Divine command, to be kept perpetually burning, and to be exclusively used in all oblations made to the Almighty. But the two oldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, perhaps heated with wine, presumed to light their censers with ordinary fire, and placing incense upon the altar, burned it, with the strange fire, before the Lord. With this irreverent conduct God was so greatly displeased that he immediately struck them dead with lightning; and, to strike the deeper terror into the rest of the priestly order, and to deter them from any future disobedience of the commands of God, Moses ordered the people to take the dead bodies from the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same condition in which they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and his two surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, not to assume any external marks of mourning for Nadab and Abihu, but to leave that to the rest of the people, from whom they should be distinguished in this, as well as in other respects, in consequence of that holy anointing, by which they had been consecrated to the Lord, and thus separated from their brethren.

This melancholy scene had scarcely closed, before another proof was given of the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty. The son of Shelomith, an Israelitish woman, whose husband was an Egyptian proselyte, quarreling with another young Israelite, had the misfortune to be worsted in the contest, and, in the height of

his passion, he cursed and blasphemed the name of the Lord so violently that Moses caused him to be apprehended and placed in confinement. Inquiring of the Almighty what punishment should be inflicted upon the transgressor, the Lord answered, "Bring forth him that cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him." In obedience to the Divine command, Moses caused the sentence to be at once executed; and this event was the more important, because it was immediately followed by the enacting of a law, that whosoever, thenceforth, should blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he were an Israelite or a stranger, should be stoned to death.

SECTION IV.

MOSES:—The Departure from Mount Sinai—Their March—Order of their Encampments—Murmurings of the People—Punishment of Fire—Commission of the Seventy Elders—Quails given to the People for Food—Rebellion of Aaron and Miriam—Its Punishment—Arrival on the Borders of Canaan—Report of the ten Spies—Report of Caleb and Joshua—The People again turned into the Wilderness—Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron—Their Trial and Punishment—Aaron's Rod placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

EVERY preparation being now made for the departure of the Israelites from Mount Sinai, God directed Moses and Aaron, assisted by the heads of the several tribes, to take the census of the people, preparatory to their march, in order to ascertain the number of men in the camp capable of bearing arms. The result of this enumeration, presented six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty true-born Israelites, between the ages of twenty and fifty years, exclusive of the tribe of Levi, all of whom, as we have already observed, were entirely devoted to the service of the Tabernacle.

In their encampment, the Tabernacle was placed in the centre, and at the opening of the court, Moses, Aaron, and the Priests, took their positions. On the south side were placed the Kohathites, or the descendants of Kohath, the second son of Levi; on the west, the Gershonites, or the descendants of Gershon, his eldest son; and on the north, the Merarites, or the descendants of Merari, Levi's youngest son. Beyond the Tabernacle, the Priests, and the Levites, were encamped the twelve tribes, in four grand divisions, under the standards of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. The tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, formed the first division, and occupied the eastern side of the square of the camp. On the south side were stationed the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west, the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; and on the north, those of Dan, Naphtali, and Asher.

The pillar of cloud, which was to be their guide, both by day and by night, usually rested upon the Tabernacle; and whenever they were to commence their march, it removed to the eastern part of the camp. On such occasions, the trumpet was immediately sounded, and upon the first signal thus given, the standard of Judah was raised, and the tribes that belonged to it started forward. The Tabernacle was then hastily taken down, and the Gershonites and Merarites took charge of the wagons into which the boards and the staves which belonged to it were placed. This being done, the trumpet sounded a second alarm, when the standard of Reuben's camp advanced, with the three tribes that belonged to it. These were followed by the Kohathites, who bore the sanctuary upon their shoulders. The standard of Ephraim's camp, with the tribes that belonged to it, next moved; and the remaining three tribes, under the standard of Dan, brought up the rear.

The Israelites being now ready to commence their march, Moses addressed himself to God, and said, "Rise, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee;" and when the Ark of the Covenant rested, he would add, "Return, O Lord, with the many thousands of Israel."

The jealous care which the Almighty had hitherto shown towards the Israelites—working wonders for their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt—miraculously supplying their wants in the desert—rewarding them when they were faithful and obedient to his commands, and inflicting the most exemplary punishments upon them when they disregarded his precepts—he had a right to expect, would leave lessons upon their minds, not soon to be forgotten. They were, however, emphatically, a rebellious and stiff-necked race; and hence, they had marched but three days from their encampment at Sinai, before they began to complain of the fatigues of their journey, and to express their grievances to Moses with the utmost asperity. At this wicked conduct, God was so highly offended, that he caused a fire from Heaven to descend upon them, which destroyed all those who occupied the extreme parts of the camp, as the most deeply implicated in the offense. This signal punishment so terrified those that escaped, that they immediately desired Moses to intercede with the Almighty that the fire might be stayed.

The dissatisfied Israelites were, however, no sooner relieved from the fear of the consuming fire, than they began to murmur for the want of flesh for food; intimating to Moses that, though in a state of bondage in Egypt, they were still much happier than they had been since they left that country. Moses had often heard their murmurings before, and had patiently borne with them; but their numbers had now so greatly increased, that his fear lest

he should not continue to be able to govern them, became a source of great anxiety; and he therefore sought counsel and additional aid from the Almighty. God no sooner heard his request, than he directed him to select seventy men from among the Elders of Israel, and to bring them with him to the Tabernacle of the Congregation. "There," said he, "I will come down and talk with thee, and I will give them a portion of the same spirit with which I have inspired thee; and they shall bear the burthen of the people with thee." In conformity to the Divine command, Moses selected seventy of the elders, sixty-eight of whom he conducted to the Tabernacle; and they had no sooner reached that sacred place, than the promise of the Almighty was fulfilled, embracing even Eldad and Medad, the two elders who did not accompany Moses. This power of prophecying, thus miraculously communicated to these elders, so greatly surprised Joshua that, thinking it an assumption on their part, of a prerogative of his master, he immediately hastened to the Tabernacle, and advised Moses to restrain them. But Moses, so far from following this advice, meekly replied, "Would to God that all the Lord's people were thus inspired."

The desires of the people for flesh to eat, not yet being satisfied, their murmurings at length rose to such a height, that they, in the most tumultuous manner, surrounded the tent of Moses, and demanded an immediate relief of their necessities. Moses, in this emergency, as on all other trying occasions, had instant recourse to the Most High; and intimating, in his petition, the little probability there was of supplying so great a multitude with flesh for food, the Almighty was pleased graciously to promise, that he would himself remove the difficulty; and at the same time gently rebuked Moses in the following terms: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether

my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." According to this promise, the Almighty, soon after, caused a south wind to arise, which drove such quantities of quails from the sea-coast into the camp, that the people feasted upon them for a whole month. But God soon called them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand for flesh, and their distrust of his providence; for while they were still regaling themselves with their dainty food, he visited them with so severe a plague, that great numbers died of it, and were buried on the spot where they fell. In consequence of this awful visitation, the place was called Kibroth-Hattaavah, *the Graves of the Lusters.*

At Hazeroth, the place to which the Israelites next marched, a circumstance occurred of the most unpleasant nature. Aaron and Miriam, observing the power and influence of Moses over the people, and that God chiefly used him as the medium through which he communicated his sacred oracles, began to regard him with an envious eye. To give some color to their conduct, they pretended to be offended with him for having married a foreigner, whom they contemptuously called an Ethiopian; and then, to lessen his importance in the eyes of the people, and to enhance their own, they added, "Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" Moses immediately perceived the discontent of his brother and sister; but, regarding the matter as a mere personal pique, he took no farther notice of it. The Almighty, however, being greatly offended at their conduct, at once summoned them to appear, with Moses, at the door of the Tabernacle; and, having sharply rebuked them for their wickedness, withdrew his presence; soon after which, Miriam, as the instigator of this opposition to Moses, was afflicted with a leprosy, which removed her from the camp for seven days.

After Miriam's return to the camp, the Israelites removed to the desert of Paran, whence they marched to Kadesh-Barnea, which was situated on the frontier of the land of Canaan. At this place Moses, by Divine command, selected twelve men, one from each tribe, and sent them over into the promised land to examine the country; instructing them diligently to observe the strength of its cities and inhabitants, the nature of the soil, and its principal productions, some of which he directed them to bring with them on their return. With these instructions, the twelve spies set forward on their mission, and proceeded from the entrance of the country on the south, to its extremity on the north. On their return, they passed through a valley remarkable for its fertility in vines, and therefore called the *Valley of Eshcol*, which signifies a *cluster of grapes*. Attracted by the fineness of the fruit, they determined to carry some of it with them to the camp. They, therefore, cut down a branch containing a single cluster, but of such an amazing size that it required two men to carry it. Nor was this the only extraordinary production of this fertile soil: the golden fig, the beautiful pomegranate, and a variety of other rich fruits, loaded the trees, samples of all of which they took with them.

The spies, having carefully examined the whole country, returned at the expiration of forty days; and after exhibiting the fruits of the land, they communicated the observations which they had made during their journey through it. "The land," said they, "is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful. There are great cities with strong walls. We have seen those men of the race of Anak, warlike men, and of a gigantic stature. The Amalekites inhabit the south part of the land; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites, the mountains; and the Canaanites, along the sea-coast, and on the banks of the

river Jordan." This report of the majority of the spies greatly intimidated the Israelites, and a fearful state of commotion was produced in the camp; but Caleb and Joshua, who were of the number of those who had been sent into the land, endeavored to compose and encourage the people, and exhorted them to go up at once, and take possession of the country; "for," said they, "we are well able to overcome it." Irritated by the advice of these two faithful inspectors of the promised land, the ten unfaithful spies replied, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we;" and then, with regard to the country itself, and its inhabitants, they added, "The land eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it were men of stature; and there we saw the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

By these conflicting reports, the people became more and more agitated; and "the whole congregation lifted up their voices and wept." This weeping was immediately followed by murmurings against Moses and Aaron, and they said unto them, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or, would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?" This address so deeply affected Moses and Aaron, that they immediately fell on their faces before all the assembly; and Caleb and Joshua, perceiving this, rent their clothes, and again addressed the multitude, saying, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord; neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from

them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not." But the spirit of rebellion had now become too violent to be quelled by words, however reasonable or persuasive; and they, therefore, instead of yielding to Caleb and Joshua, resolved to stone them at once to death. This resolution they would have instantly executed, had not "The Glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel."

This open rebellion, and manifest distrust of the providence of God, so highly offended the Almighty, that he at once resolved, that none of that generation of Israel, then over twenty years of age, excepting Caleb and Joshua, should inherit the land of promise; and he, therefore, after destroying, by a plague, the ten unfaithful spies, directed Moses to lead the people again into the wilderness, where they were to wander forty years; declaring that, "There they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." When Moses communicated intelligence of this determination of the Almighty, to the people, they were, as was to be expected, deeply affected by it; "and they rose up early in the morning, and got them up into the top of the mountains, saying, 'Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned.'" But their penitence was evidently feigned, and not felt; and, therefore, Moses commanded them not to go up, as the Lord would not be among them. But they still presumed to go up to the hill-top; "nevertheless the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfitted them, even unto Hormah," a place distant eleven days journey from the camp.

This general rebellion, and the severe punishment which followed it, was far from terminating the perverse conduct

of the wicked Israelites; for soon after, Korah, of the tribe of Levi, and cousin to Moses, with Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, formed a combination with two hundred and fifty of the most influential princes of the congregation, against Moses and Aaron. Under the pretext that their leaders assumed too much authority, they said to them, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them—and the Lord is among them: wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves, above the congregation of the Lord?" When Moses heard this strange allegation, he fell on his face, and, after earnest supplication to the Almighty, he rose from the ground and referred the whole matter to God's own decision. "To-morrow," said he, "the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you censers, Korah and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow: and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy."

As Korah, by his artful address, had succeeded in influencing most of the leading men of Israel to favor his cause, he readily consented to have the controversy between him and Aaron decided as Moses had proposed; and, on the following day, accordingly, he and all his company appeared with their censers before the Tabernacle. There they were soon met by Moses and Aaron, with their censers; and such was the general excitement throughout the camp, that the whole congregation assembled to witness the strange scene. No sooner, however, were the preparations made for this extraordinary trial, than the people beheld, with consternation, an unusual splendor issuing from the cloud that rested upon the Tabernacle, out of which the indignant voice of the Lord

came, saying to Moses and Aaron, "Separate yourselves from the congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." But Moses, not willing that the whole nation should perish for the sin of one man, entreated the Lord on their behalf, saying, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with the whole congregation?" This entreaty had the desired effect; and God, accordingly, directed Moses to order the people to separate themselves from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, immediately after which, "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation.' In addition to this awful judgment upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the three leaders in this rebellion, "there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

It now became evident, however, that nothing could subdue the rebellious spirit of this wicked people; and, accordingly, on the following day, they began again to murmur against Moses and Aaron, in reference to the events of the preceding day, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." This audacious conduct was more than the patience of the Almighty could endure; and he, therefore, notwithstanding the intercessions of Moses and Aaron for the deluded multitude, sent a plague among them, which hastily swept off fourteen thousand and seven hundred.

This rebellion of Korah and his accomplices, was directed more particularly against Aaron and his family, in reference to their pretensions of exclusive right to the priestly office; and, therefore, to prevent all future contests on this subject, God was pleased to work a miracle.

He ordered Moses to take a rod from each of the tribes, and to write upon it the name of the prince of the tribe to which it belonged; and to write Aaron's name upon the rod of the tribe of Levi. This being done, the twelve rods were placed in the Tabernacle, before the ark of testimony; and, on the following morning, when the rods were examined, the rod of Aaron was found, during the night, to have budded, blossomed, and even borne ripe almonds, while the remaining eleven rods had undergone no change. This being a convincing proof that God had singled out Aaron and his family for the priestly office, the people seem to have been, thenceforth, satisfied with this arrangement; and, to keep them in perpetual remembrance of this remarkable event, Aaron's rod was laid up in the Ark of the Covenant, and there, for generations, preserved, along with the miraculously-preserved pot of manna.

SECTION V.

MOSES:—The Family of Aaron established in the Priesthood—Wanderings of the People near the Mountains of Idumæa—Death of Miriam—Miraculous Supply of Water from the Rock of Kadish—Arrival at Mount Hor—Death of Aaron—Succeeded by his Son, Eleazer—Signal Victory over the Canaanites—Renewed Murmurings—Punishment of Fiery Serpents—The Miraculous Cure—The People again in the Vicinity of Canaan—Conquest of Moab and Midian—Balaam requested to curse Israel—His Character and Conduct—The Mission of Moses ended—His Death and Character.

THE miracle of the budding rod firmly established the family of Aaron in the priestly office; and for many years from that period, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, but chiefly about the mountains of Idumæa, until God, by shortening the duration of human life, had removed from the earth almost all the generations "of whom he had sworn in his wrath that they should not enter into his

rest." But as the time of their entrance into the land of Canaan now drew near, they advanced into the wilderness of Zin, and pitched their camp at a place called Kadesh, on the borders of Idumæa, where Miriam, the sister of Moses, died, and was buried. Here the Israelites had not long remained, before they once more became greatly distressed for want of water; and, as was their usual custom, they uttered their complaints to Moses with the utmost bitterness.

Moses, as on all former occasions, sought, in this new emergency, Divine direction, when the Almighty ordered him to assemble the people together, and in their presence *speak* to the rock, and it should immediately send forth abundance of water. But Moses, irritated and provoked with the increasing rebellion of the people, instead of simply doing as the Lord had commanded, exclaimed, when he came to the rock, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his rod and *smote* the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." But this conduct of Moses so greatly displeased the Almighty as to draw down upon this hitherto faithful servant the following severe sentence: "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring the congregation into the land which I have given them."

As the direct course of the Israelites, from Kadesh to the promised land, was through Edom, Moses sent messengers to the king of that country, requesting permission to pass through his territories, assuring him that they would commit no hostility, nor molest any of his subjects. But the king of Edom would, on no condition, grant this favor to the Israelites, and they, therefore, endeavored to pass round the land of the Edomites by marching in a

different direction. In their progress around the land of Edom, the Israelites came to Mount Hor—a place thenceforth memorable on account of the death of Aaron. The circumstances, attending this sad event, were unusually solemn. God directed Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazer, and lead them up into the top of the mountain, in the sight of all the congregation, and there strip off Aaron's sacerdotal robes, and put them upon Eleazer. "And Aaron died there, in the top of the mountain; and Moses and Eleazer came down from the mount. And all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days."

While the Israelites lay encamped near Mount Hor, they were suddenly attacked by Arad, one of the kings of the southern Canaanites; and in the conflict that followed, the Israelites were defeated, and some of them made prisoners. Mortified by this defeat, the Israelites made a vow to God, that if he would deliver these people into their hands, they would utterly destroy them and their cities. The Almighty was pleased to listen to their request; and accordingly, in a subsequent battle, Israel completely triumphed, took possession of the country of the Canaanites, and put the inhabitants to the sword.

Soon after this signal display of Divine favor, the Israelites, while passing through a barren country, entirely forgot their recent success, relapsed into those murmurings which had long been habitual to them, and reiterating their old complaints, said to Moses, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread." This fresh instance of their impiety and distrust of God, drew down upon the Israelites one of the severest punishments they had ever endured for it was on this occasion that the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, "and they bit the people; and much

people of Israel died." This dreadful calamity so greatly alarmed the Israelites, that they immediately applied to Moses for protection, acknowledging their sin, and beseeching him to intercede with God for their relief. Moses, pitying their distress, readily complied with their request; and, in answer to his prayer, "the Lord said unto Moses, 'Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh on it, shall live.' And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, and whosoever that was bitten of the fiery serpents, when they looked upon it, lived."

The Israelites were now in the immediate vicinity of the promised land—an inheritance to be *won* before it could be *enjoyed;* and hence commenced that series of triumphs over their enemies, which have no parallel in the history of the world. The first foe encountered was Sihon, king of the Amorites, through whose country they desired peaceably to pass, but were positively prohibited from doing so. The two armies met near a place called Jahaz, and, a desperate battle ensuing, the Amorites were totally defeated, and all put to the sword. Following up the advantage which this victory afforded, the Israelites soon subdued the greater part of the enemy's country, and at length took Heshbon, the capital of the kingdom—a city situated about twenty miles east of the river Jordan. They next encountered Og, another king of the Amorites, whose dominions surrounded mount Bashan. These Amorites were of gigantic stature, and Moses, fearing that the Israelites might be alarmed at the sight of this formidable enemy, bade them not be discouraged at the appearance of the army, for the Almighty would surely deliver them into their hands. Animated by this assurance, the Israelites attacked these Amorites with such impetuosity as to

render all resistance vain; and king Og and his sons falling in the conflict, the whole country immediately submitted to the victors.

Encouraged by these signal victories, the Israelites now marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on the bank of the river Jordan, opposite to the city of Jericho. The approach of these victorious strangers spread terror throughout the whole country, and the fame of their recent success against the Amorites, threw Balak, king of Moab, and all his subjects, into the most fearful consternation. Aware that he was too weak to contend, single-handed, with the mighty force of Israel, he sought the alliance of the neighboring Midianites; and the two princes had no sooner met, than they began to devise means to avoid the common danger, and to secure themselves against their bold invaders. After much deliberation, they finally resolved to send messengers to Balaam, a noted magician, who resided at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, and endeavor to induce him, by bribes, to come to Moab, and curse the Israelites, that their success might be stayed. The fame of Balaam must, at this time, have been very great, or it could not have been believed, in lands so remote as Moab and Midian, that he had power to control the destiny of men, and even of nations. But that, though a bad man, he was really a prophet, and had been accustomed to receive, by Divine inspiration, communications from God, there can be no doubt.

The messengers dispatched to Balaam, embraced many of the principal nobility of both Moab and Midian; and as soon as they arrived at Pethor, they delivered to the prophet their message, together with the presents with which they had been intrusted, and desired him, without delay, to accompany them. But Balaam detained the messengers until the following morning; and, in the mean

time, consulting the Almighty, God said to him, "Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." Balaam, in accordance with this direction from God, simply replied to the messengers, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." This answer only stimulated Balak to send immediately to Balaam another and more numerous embassy, with richer presents, and the following message: "Let nothing hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honor, and give thee whatsoever thou shalt ask, if thou wilt but come and curse this people." This second message greatly excited the cupidity of Balaam, and, blinded by covetousness and ambition, he again applied to the Almighty for permission to go to Balak. To this application God replied, "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." That this permission was, however, intended to develop Balaam's character, there can be no doubt; for he had scarcely started on his journey, before, it is said, God's anger was kindled because he went; and, on his way, the Lord miraculously communicated to the dumb ass upon which he rode the power of speech, to reprove him.

When Balak heard that Balaam was approaching, he went out to the borders of his dominions to meet him; and, having conducted him to his capital, Balaam soon after caused seven altars to be erected on an eminence in the sight of the Israelites, and, having offered an ox and a ram on each, he left Balak to watch the sacrifices, and retired to consult the Almighty respecting the result. On his return to the altars, Balaam, addressing Balak and the princes of Moab, said, "Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, 'Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.'

How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For, from the tops of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Balak was greatly incensed at Balaam for the failure of this first attempt to curse the Israelites; but, in hopes that another trial might prove more successful, he caused other altars to be erected—first on mount Pisgah, and afterwards on mount Peor, and on the high places of Baal, and ordered the offerings to be repeated. All their efforts, however, to curse Israel, proved equally ineffectual; and Balak at length indignantly dismissed Balaam from Moab to return to his own country. Disappointed at not receiving the rewards of his unrighteous designs against the Israelites, Balaam seems soon to have conceived a plan for seducing Israel to sin, and thus forfeit the protection of the Almighty. The plan proposed, and which he immediately communicated to Balak, was, to send the daughters of Moab and Midian into the Israelitish camp, that they, by their blandishments, might allure Israel from the worship of Jehovah, to that of their idol, Baal, and also lead them to the commission of other sins. This wicked device was immediately carried into effect, and was attended with all the fatal success anticipated.

For allowing themselves to be thus deluded, and led astray by these strange women, God punished the Israelites with the utmost severity. He first directed Moses to select out a thousand of the principal offenders, and bring them into the presence of the whole congretion; immediately after which, he sent a plague into the camp, which

soon carried off twenty-three thousand more. These merited punishments so greatly alarmed the sinful Israelites, that they immediately assembled at the door of the Tabernacle, and, with the most expressive sense of affliction, they bewailed their folly and wickedness in suffering themselves to have been led astray by a strange people, who were, at the same time, their mortal enemies. This penitence of the congregation, together with an heroic act of Phineas, the son of Eleazer the high-priest, turned away the Divine wrath from Israel, and the plague ceased.

After the disorders, which the Moabite and Midianite women had created, were removed, and the offending Israelites punished, Moses was directed by God to number the people; and, from the census then taken, it appeared that there were about a thousand less than when they left Egypt. The Almighty next ordered Moses to punish the Midianites, as the principal authors of the late defection and consequent calamity. With this view, he drew out a band of twelve thousand choice warriors, taking a thousand from each tribe, and, accompanied by Phineas, who took with him the ark and the sacred trumpets, they entered the enemy's country with full confidence of success. Though their army was so comparatively small, yet, trusting in their Divine Protector, they soon vanquished five kings, at the head of their respective hosts, and put them all to the sword. It was in one of these battles that the wicked prophet Balaam, whose avarice had induced him to join the Moabite army, was slain.

The vast number of the enemy overcome in these different engagements, may be fairly inferred from the immense amount of spoils taken. These, besides the thousands of women and children that were made captives, and the great quantity of rich goods, and gold and silver orna-

ments, comprised seventy-two thousand oxen, sixty-one thousand asses, and six hundred and seventy thousand five hundred sheep; and, what is still more remarkable, not a single Israelite fell in the conflict.

The conquest of Moab and Midian placed the Israelites in possession of all that part of the country which lay on the east side of the river Jordan; and, as the land was very fertile, and afforded abundance of pasturage, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, requested Moses to allow them to make it their permanent abode. To this request Moses readily acceded, on condition that they would furnish their proportion of the army, which would still be required to complete the conquest of the promised land. He then, by Divine direction, designated the limits of the country that was still to be conquered, and ordered that the distribution of the whole should be made among the different tribes by lot; assigning the chief arrangement of their future settlement to Eleazer, the high-priest, and Joshua, the general of the army. To the Levites, who were to possess no landed property, he assigned, as residences, forty-eight cities, with their suburbs, six of which were to be *cities of refuge*, whither the Israelite, who had accidentally killed another, might flee, and there remain in safety until the death of the high-priest, which should be the sign of his restoration to liberty.

The forty years' sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness, having now nearly closed, Moses called all the people together on the plains of Moab, and there, in the presence of the whole congregation, rehearsed the gracious dealings of God with their fathers since they left Egypt—their continual murmurings and rebellions against him, and the many severe judgments that followed, even to his own exclusion from the promised land. He then gave them a

summary of the various laws which God had instituted for the promotion of their happiness; and, after repeating the Ten Commandments, he reminded them of the solemn manner in which they were delivered from mount Sinai, and of the many obligations they were under, to render a strict obedience to them. He farther assured them, that if they proved faithful to God, and kept his commandments, the Almighty would bestow innumerable blessings upon them; but should they, on the contrary, forget him, and neglect his statutes, he would visit them with the severest calamities.

These, and various other directions relative to their future conduct in the land of Canaan, Moses first delivered to the people verbally, and then afterwards caused them to be written in a book and placed within the ark, there to remain, to be used as a witness against them, should they, at any future time, again rebel. He also composed the song of Recapitulation—a poem of unusual excellence—in which he particularly noticed the many benefits which God had bestowed upon his people—their ingratitude and forgetfulness of him—the punishments with which he had afflicted them; and the threats of greater judgments, should they persist in provoking him by a repetition of their follies and crimes. This beautiful poetic performance extends from the commencement of the thirty-second, to the end of the forty-third chapter of Deuteronomy.

Moses having now brought the Israelites to the borders of the land of Canaan, his mission on earth was finished, and he, therefore, after taking a solemn leave of the people, constituted, in accordance with the Divine command, Joshua as his successor. He then ascended to the top of mount Pisgah, whence he could survey the entire country which God had, more than five hundred and fifty years

before, promised to Abraham's posterity. Here, after having for some time gazed, with melancholy admiration, on the delightful plains of Jericho, and the fair cliffs and lofty cedars of Lebanon, he quietly resigned his gentle spirit into the hands of the Almighty, and his emancipated soul at once entered upon the possession of a far happier Canaan than that upon which he had just been gazing. The death of this distinguished servant of God occurred 1451 A. C., and when he had just attained the one hundred and twentieth year of his age.

Though Moses was, at the time of his death, so far advanced in life, yet "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." His death, therefore, may be regarded as an event as miraculous as any other incident in his wonderful career. His burial, too, was equally remarkable; for God himself buried him in a valley, in the land of Moab, opposite to Beth Peor, and in so secret a manner that the place of his interment has never been discovered.

Moses, in whatever light we view his character, must be regarded as one of the most remarkable men of any age or country. In addition to his natural talents, he enjoyed every advantage of education then known; and, in the exercise of his varied powers, he exhibited all the attributes of a skillful leader, a profound philosopher, an eminent prophet, and a beautiful, pathetic, and even sublime poet. But the circumstance which exalts his character immeasurably above any other of the sons of men, is the intimate relation which he bore for many years to the Deity himself; so that, in allusion to the coming Messiah, he could, with propriety, say, "A prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee from among thy brethren like unto me."

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE JUDGES.

SECTION I.

JOSHUA:—The Crossing of the Jordan—Fall of Jericho—The Transgression of Achan—Fall of Ai—Deception of the Gibeonites—League of the Canaanitish Kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, against the Israelites—The total overthrow of the Allies—The Sun and Moon stayed in their Course—Canaan divided by Lot amongst the Tribes—The Portion of Joshua and Caleb—Joshua's Death and Character.

IMMEDIATELY after the death of Moses, 1451 A. C., Joshua, his successor, assumed the command of the Israelites, and at once made preparation to lead them over the river Jordan, and settle them in the land of Canaan. To encourage his heart in this arduous undertaking, the Almighty was pleased graciously to promise him his Divine assistance; saying unto him, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong, and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Under this assurance of assistance from the Almighty, Joshua ordered the captains of Israel to proclaim throughout the camp, that within three days they should pass the Jordan, to take possession of the land which God had

promised them; and that they must, therefore, provide themselves with such necessaries as the important occasion required. He then called together the leaders of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and reminded them of the promise they had made to Moses, not to forsake the common cause till all their enemies should be subdued. These tribes at once declared their determination, faithfully to fulfil their engagement, and to obey him as implicitly as they had obeyed his prede cessor.

The camp of Israel was, at this time, directly opposite to the city of Jericho; and that city, therefore, must neces sarily be the first place of attack, after they should cross the river. As a precautionary step to this important enterprise, Joshua sent two spies, to observe the situation and the strength of the city, and to ascertain the disposition of the inhabitants. These spies, having crossed the Jor dan and entered the city without observation, were kindly received by the harlot Rahab, and entertained at her house. They had not, however, been long in the city, before information of their arrival was conveyed to the king, who at once sent officers to the house of Rahab to have them seized. Rahab had, however, received information of the king's design, and she, therefore, hid the spies under some stalks of flax on the flat roof of her house. This being done, she descended and met the officers, and after hearing from them the object of their visit, she replied that there had been such persons at her house, but that she knew not who they were, nor whence they came; that soon after dark, and before the gates of the city were shut, they departed; but, as they could not have gone far, she advised them to pursue and overtake them.

The officers of the king, believing the account which Rahab had given them of the spies, immediately left her,

and went in pursuit of them; but they had no sooner gone, than she hastened to her guests, and informed them of all that had passed, dwelling particularly upon the great danger to which she had exposed herself and her family on their account. In return for this kindness, she exacted from them an oath, that when the city should be taken by the Israelites, herself and her family should be preserved from the general destruction. To this the spies readily consented, immediately after which, she let them down into the street by a rope from a window, whence they, in accordance with her advice, escaped, unperceived, to the mountains; and, having there concealed themselves for three days, at the expiration of that time they recrossed the Jordan, hastened to the camp of the Israelites, at Shittim, and gave Joshua a particular account of their expedition, adding, "Truly, the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country faint because of us." The character of Rahab has been a matter of much speculation; but whatever it may have been previous to the reception and concealment of the spies, that she was, at that time, a true believer, is evident from the testimony given of her by the Apostle Paul, in the thirty-first verse of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The morning following the return of the spies to the camp, Joshua left Shittim, and conducted his army to the bank of the Jordan. Here he communicated to each tribe the order to be observed in their passage through the river. The priests, bearing the Ark of the Covenant, marched to the margin of the stream, in advance of the main body of the army about two thousand cubits; and their feet had no sooner touched the water, than the upper part of the river rolled back and rose on heaps above them, while the waters below flowed on in their natural course, leaving a

passage through which for the Israelites to pass, about sixteen miles in width. When the priests reached the middle of the channel, they stood still until the whole multitude of the congregation had passed by them to the opposite shore; and then, according to the command of Joshua, they reared a monument with twelve stones, on the spot where they were standing, immediately after which they left the bed of the river, and the waters at once returned, and resumed their natural course.

The Israelites, having, by this miraculous passage of the Jordan, reached the plains of Jericho, encamped about two miles northeast of the city; and here Joshua erected another monument, with twelve stones which had been brought from the bed of the Jordan, as a testimony to posterity that the Almighty had, by the interposition of his Divine power, opened a safe passage for them through the channel of the stream. The ceremony of circumcision, and the celebration of the passover, both of which had been discontinued during their journeyings in the wilderness, were now renewed, the Lord saying unto Joshua, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you; therefore the place shall be called Gilgal," which signifies *to roll away*. The miraculous supply of manna also ceased, and the people thenceforth subsisted upon the natural productions of the country.

The intelligence of the miraculous passage of the river Jordan by the Israelites, soon circulated through the adjacent parts of the country, and filled the inhabitants with such consternation, that when the kings of the Amorites, who dwelt on the west side of the river, and the kings of the Canaanites, who inhabited those parts which were next to the sea, heard of it, their hearts sunk with fear, and their courage failed them. But before Joshua marched his army against Jericho, he secretly left the camp for the

purpose of reconnoitering the city alone, in order to ascertain in what way it might be most effectually approached.

While Joshua was making his observations, there suddenly appeared to him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. Little intimidated by this unusual appearance, Joshua immediately advanced towards the man, and demanded of him, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "Nay, but as a captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Joshua's eyes being now opened, he perceived that it was a manifestation of Jehovah himself; and he "fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped, and said, 'What saith my Lord unto his servant?' And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, 'Loose the shoe off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground.'" He then gave him specific directions concerning the manner in which the city should be taken; informing him that for six successive days the whole army should march round the city, with seven priests before the Ark, carrying in their hands trumpets of rams' horns—that on the seventh day, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon the giving of a certain signal, the priests should give a long blast with their trumpets, and the people should utter a great shout—that as soon as this shout should be heard, the walls of the city should fall to the ground, and the army enter it without obstruction.

Joshua, having received these directions from the Divine messenger, immediately returned to the camp, and, early the following morning, he marched, with his whole army, against Jericho. The city was strong, well provided, and filled with inhabitants, who seemed resolved to make a vigorous defense. But the Almighty himself was on the side of Israel; and their leader having strictly obeyed the Divine orders, the result was in exact accordance with the promise. On the seventh day, as soon as the people had

gone round the city seven times, and had shouted their great shout, the walls fell to the ground, and the Israelites entered the place without opposition—putting every living creature within it to the sword, excepting Rahab and her family, who were spared according to the stipulation made with the spies.

The spoils of the city in gold, silver, and brass, were immense; and these being gathered together, Joshua presented them to the priests, that they might be deposited in the sacred treasury. He then reduced the city to ashes, and denounced a heavy curse upon any one who should ever attempt to rebuild it; saying, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

Joshua, previous to the fall of Jericho, had forbidden the army to take any private plunder in that city, and had used the greatest precaution to prevent it. But, notwithstanding all his vigilance, Achan, of the tribe of Judah, succeeded in concealing in a pit dug in the centre of his tent, a rich royal robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels value. This daring theft, though carefully concealed from the wicked perpetrator's companions, was clearly seen by the eye of the Almighty, and soon after punished in the most awful manner.

The destruction of Jericho was immediately followed by an attack upon Ai, a small city east of Bethel, and about ten or twelve miles from the Israelitish camp. As Joshua had been informed by some spies that the inhabitants of the place were neither numerous, nor well prepared for defense, he detached a select band of three thousand chosen men against it, expecting an easy conquest. But,

to his utter amazement, the men of Ai had no sooner come out of the city to defend it, than his own forces were seized with a sudden panic, and precipitately fled before this inconsiderable enemy, leaving, in their flight, thirty-six of their number dead upon the field. This defeat, though comparatively small, so deeply affected Joshua, that he had immediate recourse to the Almighty, to ascertain the cause; when God informed him that an act of theft and sacrilege among the people had forfeited the Divine protection, and that no farther success could attend the house of Israel till the cause of his displeasure was removed—intimating, at the same time, the means by which the offender might be discovered and brought to punishment.

In accordance with the Divine directions Joshua, on the following morning, prepared to discover the one who had brought so great an evil upon the people. With this view, he ordered all the tribes to assemble before the altar, and upon casting lots among them, the tribe of Judah was taken. He then proceeded from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to individual, when the criminal was discovered to be Achan, the son of Carmi. As soon as this discovery was made, "Joshua said unto Achan, 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, and hide it not from me.' And Achan said, 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus, and thus have I done. When I saw amongst the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold, they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.' "

This frank and candid confession of Achan was imme-

diately followed by the production of the stolen treasures; but still the sentence of the law was to be executed upon the offender. He, therefore, together with his family, his cattle, and all that he possessed, was immediately conducted to a neighboring valley, thenceforth called the valley of Achor; and, after the living were stoned to death, all was placed in one common pile, and reduced to ashes. Over the ruins thus produced, a pile of stones was raised, to perpetuate the remembrance of the crime, and also to deter others from committing a similar offense.

The Divine vengeance being appeased by the destruction of Achan, God commanded Joshua again to attack the city of Ai, assuring him that he should now be no less successful than he had been against Jericho; and, to encourage the soldiers, he allowed them to plunder the city, and to carry off the cattle. Accordingly, after having first placed a detachment of five thousand men in ambush between Bethel and Ai, Joshua, at the head of an army of thirty thousand, marched against the city; and as soon as the king of Ai saw them approaching, he, with all his forces, rushed forth to give them battle. On the approach of the Aians, the Israelites feigned a retreat, in order to draw them from the vicinity of the city to the plains below; and as soon as this was effected, Joshua gave the concerted signal to the ambuscade, who immediately entered the city, and, finding it undefended, set it on fire. As the flames rose to the view of the army of Israel, Joshua halted in his retreat, faced the enemy, and attacked them with such fury, that their ranks were immediately thrown into disorder, and they compelled to seek safety in flight. They soon, however, beheld the flames of Ai rising above the city walls; and, being now attacked by both divisions of the Israelitish army, their energies became at once paralyzed, and over twelve thousand of them were slain,

almost without resistance. The king himself was taken prisoner and hung upon a gibbet, and the city was left a heap of ruins.

The brief interval of rest which followed this second great victory of Joshua over his enemies, was appropriated by him to the offering of a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Almighty for the wonderful success which He had afforded him in his recent battles. For this purpose he repaired to mount Ebal, and there erected an altar, upon which, in the presence of the whole congregation of Israel, he presented a solemn sacrifice before God. He then selected some of the most remarkable passages of the law, and caused them to be engraved upon smooth stones; and afterwards, while the vast multitude of the people were still gathered around the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, "he read *all* the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."

The remarkable success which had attended Joshua's arms against the cities of Jericho and Ai, so greatly alarmed the kings of many of the provinces on the west side of the Jordan, that they entered into a confederacy for their mutual defense. But the Gibeonites, foreseeing the danger to which they were exposed, resolved to effect a treaty with the Israelites by stratagem. They selected, for this purpose, a number of the most artful of their countrymen, and, with directions to pretend to have come as ambassadors from a very distant land, they sent them to Joshua, to enter into a treaty with him. With their tattered garments, their worn-out shoes, and their dry and musty provisions — all of which were assumed — they

arrived at the camp of Israel; and, being presented to Joshua, they told him that, as their rulers had heard of the many miracles which God had wrought for the Israelites in the land of Egypt, and the wonderful success with which he had favored their arms against every power that had opposed them on their way to that country, they had sent them from a great distance to form a league of friendship with them. This plausible story of the ambassadors, being entirely sustained by their exhausted aspect, Joshua, without hesitation, entered into a treaty of amity with them, which Eleazer, the high-priest, and the princes of the several tribes, with the consent of the people, solemnly ratified. Three days after the Gibeonites had departed from the camp of Israel, however, the plot and the imposition were discovered; but, as the solemnity of the oath of treaty could not be violated, Joshua determined that, as a just punishment for their treacherous deception, the whole nation should be reduced to a state of unconditional bondage.

The desertion of the common cause by the Gibeonites, and their separate treaty with the Israelites, was immediately followed by a powerful combination between Adonizedek, king of Jebus, Hoham, king of Hebron, Piram, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, king of Lachish, and Debir, king of Eglon; and they resolved to commence their warlike operations against Gibeon, the capital of their treacherous neighbors, and utterly destroy the city. With this view, having united all their forces, they marched towards that place; but, when the Gibeonites heard of their design, conscious of their own comparative weakness, they dispatched a messenger to Joshua, setting forth their danger, and imploring his immediate assistance. As soon as Joshua received this message he sought counsel of the Almighty; "and the Lord said unto him, 'Fear them not,

for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.' "

Joshua, having received this Divine assurance of success, set his army immediately in motion in search of the enemy; and, that no time might be lost, he did not remit his march even during the night. Arriving at the enemy's camp by the dawn of the following morning, he at once commenced the attack upon them; and such was the consternation into which they were all thrown, that, with little or no resistance, they betook themselves to precipitate flight. To complete their entire overthrow, God, at the same time, showered down upon them a violent hail-storm, the stones of which were so large, that more of the enemy perished by them than fell by the sword. It was on this memorable occasion that Joshua, in the ardor of his pursuit of the Canaanites, entreated of the Almighty, that the sun and moon might stand still in the heavens until he had effected their total destruction. Strange and extraordinary as this request was, yet God was pleased to grant it; "and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies—the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day; and there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

After this signal victory, Joshua marched into the southern parts of Canaan; and, having subdued the country and destroyed the inhabitants, he returned with his victorious army to his camp at Gilgal. He was not, however, permitted to enjoy a long repose; for, his rapid conquests, and the total destruction of the enemy, spread such terror throughout those parts of the land of Canaan which still remained unsubdued, that a new and formidable combination was formed against Israel, insti-

gated by Jabin, king of Hazor. The vast army which they raised, did not, however, in the least degree, intimidate Joshua; for, under the direction of the Almighty, he immediately took the field, marched towards the enemy, and attacked them so suddenly, that they were thrown into the utmost confusion, and all slain except a very few, who escaped into a distant part of the country. Jabin, the leader of the confederacy, was taken prisoner and put to death; and his capital, the city of Hazor, was burned to the ground. The destruction of this powerful combination against Israel, was soon followed by the submission of the whole of the land of Canaan, the death of thirty-one kings having attended the last contest. Even the children of Anak, those giants who had formerly been so great a terror to the Israelites, were all destroyed, with the exception of those that dwelt in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

Joshua, having thus conquered the central and most important parts of the land of Canaan, resolved to divide the country amongst the different tribes that were still unprovided for, and to dismiss the members of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had assisted him in his conquests, to the settlements which Moses had assigned them, on the east side of the Jordan. With this view he appointed commissioners to survey the land; and these, at the expiration of seven months, completed their task, and presented their report, immediately after which Joshua, assisted by Eleazer, the high-priest, the princes of the tribes, and the elders of the people, distributed the whole country as God had commanded; saying, "Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many, thou shalt give the more inheritance; and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance. Notwithstanding, the land shall

be divided by lot: according to lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few."

This distribution of the land of Canaan among the different tribes being made by lot, it is remarkable, that to each tribe fell a portion of the country exactly corresponding with previously-uttered prophecies by Jacob and Moses. To the tribe of Judah, fell a section of country abounding in vines and pasture-grounds; to that of Asher, one plenteous in oil, iron, and brass; to that of Naphtali, one extending from the west to the south of Jordan; to that of Benjamin, the land in which the temple was afterwards built; to those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of sea-ports; and to those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits. The inheritance of the tribe of Dan lay in the extreme south of the conquered territory, and was well adapted to their warlike habits and propensities. To the tribes of Simeon and Levi, no particular inheritance was given—the former having a portion with Judah, and the latter being interspersed among the other tribes.

Having thus settled the tribes of Israel in their new possessions, Joshua selected for his own inheritance, Timnath-serah, in mount Ephraim, and there built a city, which he made the place of his future abode. Upon Caleb, his early and tried companion, he, at the same time, bestowed Hebron, a city which was taken from the sons of Anak. About the same time Shiloh was selected as the place to which the tribes of Israel should resort for Divine worship; and at this place, accordingly, all Israel assembled, and there set up the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

Seven years had now elapsed since the Israelites commenced the conquest of Canaan; and, the war being happily ended, Joshua called together, at Shiloh, the

auxiliaries furnished by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and, after highly commending them for their fidelity and valor, earnestly exhorted them, as they were now about to be separated from the Tabernacle, to be faithful in their duty to God, and ever to bear in mind those laws which he had given them by his servant Moses. He then affectionately dismissed them, to join their respective tribes on the east side of the river Jordan, and, at the same time, recommended that, when they should reach their homes, they should share the rich spoils which they carried back with them, equally with their brethren, who, though they had taken no part in the war, had still protected their families during their absence.

During the ten years that followed, Joshua resided in the midst of his people; and as, throughout this whole period, they venerated their pious leader, and were obedient to the laws of God, it was, perhaps, the most peaceful and prosperous period that the nation ever enjoyed. The days of Joshua now, however, began to draw to a close; and, as he perceived his end approaching, he called together the princes, the elders, and all the tribes of Israel, at Shechem, and addressed them in the most solemn and impressive manner, reminding them of the various ways in which the Almighty had preserved them in the midst of impending dangers — not only relieving their wants and removing their distresses, but even raising them from the most abject condition in life, to one full of prosperity and happiness. In gratitude to so great a Protector and Benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and urged them to renew the covenant with him, into which their fathers had once entered. To all this they readily consented. "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there,

under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he hath spoken unto us: and it shall, therefore, be a witness unto us, lest ye deny your God.'"

A short time after this solemn assemblage of the people, in 1434 A. C., Joshua died, being one hundred and ten years old, and was buried at Timnath-serah, in mount Ephraim. "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel." About the same time, Eleazer, the high-priest, also died, and was buried in one of the hills of mount Ephraim, which belonged to his son and successor Phineas. The death and burial of those two distinguished leaders, reminded the Israelites of the bones of Joseph, which they had brought with them out of Egypt; and they buried them also, with the utmost solemnity, in Shechem, where Jacob had purchased a piece of ground of the sons of Hamor, and which afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

SECTION II.

Limits of Canaan—The Government a pure Theocracy—Mistaken Lenity of the Israelites—Apostasy of the Tribe of Dan—Consequences that followed—Illustrative Incidents—The Case of the Apostate Priest—The Case of the Levite of Mount Ephraim—Success of the Tribe of Judah—Deplorable Condition of the Tribe of Benjamin—Their Restoration.

THE land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham and his posterity, and which Joshua, as we have seen, parcelled out among the twelve tribes of Israel, extended, from north to south, about one hundred and sixty miles, and eighty miles from east to west.

The northern boundary of the country, was Lebanon and Syria; the southern, Edom and the wilderness of Paran; the eastern, Arabia Deserta, Ammon, Moab, and Midian; and the western and southwestern, the Mediterranean sea and Egypt. This only, was properly called Canaan, and was all that was promised to the Israelites as a *possession;* but if we embrace the whole territory which, in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, and the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, was promised to them *in dominion*, we must include the entire region, from the river Euphrates on the northeast, to the river Nile on the southwest.

The government instituted by Moses and Joshua, for the Israelites, was a pure Theocracy, and was to be administered by a succession of judges, to be appointed by God himself, as he might require their services. Much of the land of Canaan, however, was still in the hands of enemies that must be subdued before the children of Israel could quietly enjoy their new possessions; and, as no leader had yet been designated to succeed Joshua, the princes of the different tribes repaired to Shiloh, to make inquiry of the Almighty relative to the manner in which the war should be prosecuted. The reply of the Lord was, that Judah should renew the contest; but, as the inheritance of Simeon was identified with that of Judah, they resolved to unite their forces till the conquest should be completed.

The unsubdued Canaanites were both numerous and powerful; and, with a large army under the command of Adoni-bezek, king of Bezek, they prepared to encounter the dreaded foe then marching against them. Their chief expectation of success, was based upon the death of Joshua; but they soon realized that the same Divine arm strengthened Judah and Simeon, that had sustained Israel's previous leader; for the two tribes attacked them with such

determined resolution, that the Canaanites immediately gave way, and more than ten thousand of their number were left dead upon the field of battle. Those that were not slain, took to flight; but, being closely pursued, comparatively few of them escaped. Adoni-bezek himself was taken prisoner; and, being brought before the elders of the two tribes, they ordered his thumbs and great toes to be cut off—a punishment which he was accustomed to inflict upon such prisoners as the previous chances of war had thrown into his power—and then sent him prisoner to Jebus, afterwards Jerusalem, where he soon after died.

The tribes of Judah and Simeon, flushed with this signal triumph, immediately resolved to drive out all the remaining Canaanites from their territory; and they, therefore, engaged in many successive expeditions against those who dwelt in the mountains, and those who occupied the southern section of the country, in all of which they were so successful, as to enable them to extend their conquests quite into the land of the Philistines. They even took that part of Jebus which lay within the borders of their inheritance; but "they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."

Following the example of Judah and Simeon, the tribe of Ephraim also, resolved to expel the Canaanites from their inheritance. With this view, they sent two spies to ascertain the condition of Bethel, the chief city of the enemy, and which had previously been called Luz. As the spies approached the city, they saw a man coming out of it, and having taken him captive, they threatened to put him to death unless he would inform them in what way the place might be most successfully approached. The man, to save his life, gave them the information they required; and the spies, communicating to the army the intelligence thus received, the city was at once entered,

and all the inhabitants, excepting the man who had been their informer, were put to the sword. The tribe of Manasseh was not, however, so successful in driving out the people who still continued to occupy parts of their inheritance; for, in many places within their borders, the Canaanites continued to dwell, and could not be expelled.

Within the inheritance of all the remaining tribes, also, were many places from which the enemy were not dislodged; and the tribe of Benjamin even allowed the Jebusites to retain possession of many of their cities in such proximity to them, that the two nations continued to live, for a long time, in amity with each other. This mistaken lenity, and the want of resolution with which the Israelites now began to meet their enemies, were highly displeasing to the Almighty; and he, therefore, sent the Angel of the Covenant, who had accompanied them in all their journeyings through the wilderness, and who had appeared to Joshua immediately after he entered the land of Canaan, to expostulate with them for their disobedient conduct—to remind them of his goodness in delivering them from the oppression of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land; of the exact performance of all his promises to them; and of their base ingratitude in disregarding his precepts.

This severe reproof from the messenger of the Almighty, so deeply affected the minds of the Israelites, that, conscious of their transgressions, they immediately fell into a general lamentation; and, deploring the wretchedness of their condition, they at once offered sacrifice to God, in order to appease his wrath, and, if possible, restore themselves to his favor. In remembrance of this circumstance, they called the place where the angel appeared to them, Bochim, or *weeping*. This repentance of the Israelites was, however, sincere in *appearance* only; for, instead

of amending their conduct, they grew worse and worse, and eventually gave themselves up to all manner of dissipation—increasing their correspondence with the Canaanites; indulging in their loose conversation; intermarrying with them; and even joining in their idolatrous worship of Baal and Ashtaroth.

In this general degeneracy of the Israelites, the tribe of Dan totally apostatized. The inheritance allotted to them in the distribution of Canaan among the different tribes, was in the immediate neighborhood of the Amorites; and those powerful enemies not being willing that they should occupy the beautiful vallies that had been assigned to them, drove them up into the adjacent mountains. The Danites, after having remained for some time among the mountains, finally resolved to seek a new settlement; and, with this view, they sent forth from their number five spies to examine the surrounding country, in order to ascertain where such settlement might be most readily effected. These spies, while on their exploring mission, came to the house of a noted idolater named Micah, who dwelt in mount Ephraim, and in whose employment they found a young Levite, who officiated as his priest. Having been generously entertained by Micah, and encouraged in their expedition by the false priest, they pursued their journey till they came to Laish, and, observing that the people of this city were careless and undisciplined, they at once perceived that there would be no difficulty in conquering them and taking possession of the place.

As, in the vicinity of the city, the country was extremely pleasant and productive, and abounded in all the necessaries of life, it afforded an additional incentive to the undertaking; and the spies, therefore, on their return to their brethren, urged that an expedition be immediately sent forward to the conquest. Six hundred men were,

accordingly, selected for this purpose; and on their way towards Laish, they passed over mount Ephraim, stopped at the house of Micah, and stole from it the ephod and the images which the spies had there seen on their first visit, in order that they might have them with them to consult on future occasions. They also induced the young Levite, by promising to make him priest of their whole tribe, to accompany them in their expedition.

Having thus robbed the house of their host of his instruments of idolatry, and drawn away his priest from him, the Danites pursued their march towards Laish, which they reached at the expiration of three days; and, finding the city entirely unguarded, they easily effected an entrance, burnt it to the ground, and destroyed all the inhabitants. They then took possession of the surrounding country, and soon after rebuilt the city, and called it Dan, after the father of their tribe. Here they now set up the images which they had stolen from Micah, and, in accordance with their promise, they made the young Levite, whose name was Jonathan, their priest. In this state of idolatrous worship, the tribe of Dan remained until the Ark of God was taken, in the days of Eli, by the Philistines—a period of not less than three hundred years.

The general apostasy of the Israelites from their Maker was soon followed by the grossest immorality; for, where riot and dissipation prevail, all moral obligations soon come to be entirely disregarded. As an illustration of this remark, in its application to the period of Israelitish history before us, we need only mention the following incident, and its consequences:—

In mount Ephraim resided a certain Levite who had married a woman of the city of Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah. This woman, after having lived for some time with her husband, resolved to leave him and return to

her father's house. The Levite patiently bore the absence of his wife for four months; but, at the expiration of that time, he resolved to go to Bethlehem and bring her home. At the house of his father-in-law, he was received with the greatest kindness; and, after having passed a few days there in social enjoyment with the family, he prepared to return, with his wife, to his own abode. Having reached, on his journey homeward, Gibeah, a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, he was there entertained for the night by an aged man of the tribe of Ephraim. During their evening repast, a number of abandoned young men of the city beset the house, and finally carried away by force the wife of the Levite to their own quarters, where they kept her until the following morning, and during the night treated her with the utmost indecency.

The woman, as soon as she was released, returned to her husband; but, so overwhelming was her anguish, that she had no sooner reached the house than she fell on the floor and expired. The Levite, after some deliberation, placed the dead body upon an ass, and conveyed it to his own house; immediately after which, he separated it into twelve equal parts, and sent, with an explanatory message, one part to each of the twelve tribes. The several tribes had no sooner received intelligence of this heinous outrage, than they called a general assembly at Mizpeh, near Shiloh, and resolved to demand of the Benjamites suitable reparation for the insult and injury that had been offered to the Levite's wife. They accordingly sent messengers to Gibeah, and to all the other settlements of the tribe, and, representing the enormity of the offense to them, required that the guilty young men should be delivered up for punishment. To this demand the inhabitants of Gibeah, and all the other Benjamites, returned a positive refusal; intimating, at the same time, that they

were fully prepared to meet all the consequences which might ensue from their determination to defend their fellow citizens, and that they wanted neither the courage, the skill, nor the numbers, to do so.

When the messengers returned with this answer, the tribes which had sent them were so enraged, that they not only resolved to march immediately against Gibeah, but made a vow, also, that none of their tribes should thenceforth intermarry with the tribe of Benjamin. Preparatory to the execution of their resolution, they consulted the Divine oracle; not, however, to ascertain whether they should undertake the war, but simply to know which of the tribes should lead the van. The tribe of Judah being designated for this position, the combined forces immediately took the field, with an army of four hundred thousand men; while that of the Benjamites consisted of only twenty-six thousand regular troops, besides seven hundred slingers who were particularly distinguished for their skill as marksmen. The two armies met on a plain near Gibeah, and, in the battle which ensued, twenty-two thousand of the combined troops fell, while the loss of the Benjamites was comparatively trifling. Night intervening, the action was not, however, decisive; and the combined army, accordingly, drew up their forces on the following morning, and again offered the Benjamites battle. Elated with the success of the previous day, the latter now marched to the conflict with such intrepidity, and commenced the action so boldly, that the former were immediately thrown into confusion, and before they could rally their forces, eighteen thousand more of them were slain.

These two successive defeats spread such consternation through the whole of the combined army, that they immediately disbanded, repaired to Shiloh, and passed a whole

day in weeping and fasting, and in presenting burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord. Having thus properly humbled themselves before the Almighty, they again asked of God whether they should renew the attack, and were answered by the mouth of Phineas, the high-priest, that they should; and they were farther informed that they should now be successful. Animated by this encouragement, they at once sent against Gibeah an army of ten thousand choice troops; and, with an ambuscade, similar to that which Joshua used in the destruction of Ai, so thoroughly overthrew the Benjamites, that, of their whole tribe, only six hundred men escaped the general carnage. These fled to a remote part of the wilderness, and there sought security in the rock or fortress of Rimmon.

When the combined tribes came to reflect upon the severity with which they had treated the Benjamites, and to recollect the rash vow they had made respecting intermarriages with them, they were so greatly distressed that they immediately repaired to Shiloh, and, prostrating themselves before the Ark of the Covenant, exclaimed, "O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" On the following morning, they came at an unusually early hour, built an altar, and offered on it sacrifices to the Lord. Having done this, and having also resolved to recruit the fallen tribe, the next question was, to determine in what manner this should be done. Their vow was inviolate, and registered on high; and, therefore, recourse must be had to some other means than the giving to the fugitives their own daughters in marriage.

After much anxiety and deep reflection, the remembrance of a determination which they had formed at the commencement of the war, came to their minds; which

was, to put all to the sword who would not join the general league against the Benjamites. An investigation was, therefore, instituted, in order to ascertain whether any such could be found; when it appeared that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had not complied with the general requisition. Thither, accordingly, twelve thousand men were dispatched, with strict orders to put every man, woman, and child they should find in the city, to the sword, with the exception of such virgins as were then marriageable. These orders were but too faithfully executed; and, of marriagable virgins, four hundred were brought away from the city, and bestowed upon the Benjamites. Two hundred of the small fragment of the tribe of Benjamin, which now caused so much solicitude, were still, however, unprovided for; and, that they also might be furnished with wives, an equal number of the young women who came up annually to dance at Shiloh, were seized and presented to them; and thus the Benjamites, though very few in number, were restored to their original position among their brethren of the other tribes. They now resumed the possession of their own country, and eventually so far increased, as to be little inferior, either in numbers or in wealth, to their former position.

SECTION III.

Israel oppressed by the King of Mesopotamia—OTHNIEL their Deliverer—His Administration—Israel Oppressed by the Moabites—Delivered by EHUD—The Rebellious Spirit of the People—SHAMGAR judges Israel—The Enterprise of DEBORAH and BARAK—The Successful Administration of Deborah—A Dreadful Famine visits the Land—The Story of Naomi and Ruth—Boaz and Ruth the Grand-parents of David.

THE civil and intestine quarrels among the Israelites, to which we have just alluded, kept them, for a time, con-

scious of their dependance upon their Maker; but these had no sooner been brought to a close, than the people again relapsed into their idolatrous and other vicious practices. This proneness to vice, evinced by them on all occasions, now so aggravated the Almighty, that he withdrew his Divine protection from them, and allowed them, as a just punishment for their sins, to fall under the oppressive yoke of their foreign enemies.

The first of these enemies that oppressed the Israelites, after they had lost the favor and protection of God, was Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia. This monarch, having invaded their territories, made an easy conquest of the whole country, and imposed a burthensome tribute upon them, under the weight of which they groaned for eight tedious years. This state of servitude becoming continually more and more irksome to them, at length brought the Israelites to a proper sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions; and they, therefore, earnestly implored the Almighty to relieve them from the yoke of their oppressors. To their earnest prayer, God was graciously pleased to listen; for their penitence awakened his compassion towards them, and "it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them."

The deliverer whom God, at this time, raised up for the Israelites, was Othniel, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, the early companion of Joshua. This young hero had remarkably distinguished himself in the war which Caleb waged against the Canaanites to secure the possession of his inheritance; and now, under Divine direction, he summoned the people to arms, boldly marched against the king of Mesopotamia and dispatched him; and, having thus released the Israelites from their servitude, settled them in a state of independence, peace, and tranquillity.

During the forty years of prosperity which followed this great deliverance, Othniel governed the people, and was the first whom the Scriptures designate as the "Judges of Israel."

The mild and equitable administration of Othniel had no sooner been brought to a close by his death, than the Israelites began to neglect their duty to their God, and to disregard his laws and ordinances, as established by Moses. The profligacy amongst them which followed, being soon noticed by their enemies, Eglon, king of the Moabites, marched an army into their country, and, in a short time, reduced most of the tribes to a state of absolute vassalage. To secure his conquest, he soon after built a palace at Jericho, and, for eighteen years, caused the Israelites to groan under the severity of his exactions. At length, however, they became thoroughly sensible of their miserable condition; and, earnestly desirous of being released from it, they addressed themselves, in the most solemn manner, to the Almighty, beseeching him to deliver them from the state of bondage and oppression, which they had been compelled, so long, to endure. To this pathetic appeal, God was pleased favorably to listen; and he, accordingly, raised them up a deliverer, in the person of EHUD, of the tribe of Benjamin.

It had no sooner been intimated to Ehud that he was to become the leader of the Israelites, than he resolved to devise some plan to relieve his countrymen from Moabitish oppression. With this view, having first secured the appointment of messenger to carry to Eglon the annual tribute exacted from his nation, in the form of a present, he prepared a dagger, and concealed it under his outer garment, that, when brought into the presence of the king, he might assassinate him; for he well knew that his brethren would be better able to contend with the Moabites, if the latter were destitute of a leader, than if their

king were still living. Having, with this preparation, arrived at Jericho, and being at once admitted into the royal presence, he presented the present, or token of submission, with which he had been intrusted. This being done, he informed the king that he had a message also for him from God, but that the delivery of it required the utmost privacy. When Eglon heard this announcement, he ordered all his attendants to leave the apartment; and Ehud, being thus left alone with the king, drew his dagger from its place of concealment, and instantly stabbed him to the heart, immediately after which, he closed and fastened the door of the apartment, and then in safety escaped to Seirath.

Having thus slain the king of Moab, Ehud immediately repaired to mount Ephraim, and, assembling the people by sound of trumpet, he related to them all the particulars attending the death of Eglon, and directed them to prepare for the approaching conflict, and follow him; "for," said he, "the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands." The Israelites readily obeyed the command of Ehud; and, having first secured all the passes that led from Moab towards the river Jordan, they marched, with all expedition, to Jericho, and while the people of that city were in the utmost confusion on account of the death of their king, the Israelites suddenly attacked them, and before any sensible resistance could be made, ten thousand of the Moabites were slain. By this signal victory, the Israelites were delivered out of the hands of the Moabites; and, from that time, during the eight following years, the people, under the administration of Ehud, enjoyed peace and prosperity.

About the same time that the Israelites who dwelt in the eastern part of the country, were relieved from their oppressors by the wisdom and valor of Ehud, those who

inhabited the western parts, and who had been, for some time, greatly annoyed by the constant incursions of the Philistines, were extricated out of their difficulties also, by SHAMGAR, the son of Anath—a man of most extraordinary strength and resolution. With no other weapon than an ox-goad, he, unaided and alone, attacked a large body of the Philistines, and, notwithstanding their great personal prowess, slew no less than six hundreds of them. This extraordinary act of valor so greatly terrified the rest of the Philistines, that they desisted for a long time, from any farther incursions upon the territories of the Israelites; and hence, under their two deliverers, the people long enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity.

The Israelites were, however, emphatically a rebellious and ungrateful people; and, accordingly, the instruments which the Almighty, from time to time, employed for their deliverance from oppression, were no sooner removed out of their sight, than they returned again to their vice and folly. Hence Ehud was scarcely dead, before, forgetting their former servitude, and the ease and plenty which they had so long enjoyed under his administration, they again began to indulge in every variety of riot and dissipation. As a just punishment for their impieties, God permitted Jabin, king of Canaan, not only to conquer them, but also to oppress them with the most unbounded severity, for the space of twenty years. Sisera, the general whom Jabin employed in conquering the Israelites, and who was the chief instrument of their oppression, was not only an old and experienced soldier himself, but had under his command a large army, well disciplined, and inured to the fatigues of war, besides nine hundred armed chariots of iron.

The Israelites, having been thus severely punished for their transgressions, at length "cried unto the Lord," and

the Almighty, ever willing to forgive his erring people on the first signs of penitence for their sins, was pleased graciously to interpose once more in their behalf; and that the deliverance, on this occasion, might be the more signal, he resolved to effect it by the agency of a woman. DEBORAH, the Prophetess, who, at this time, judged Israel, and whose dwelling-place was under a palm-tree, between Bethel and Ramah, was selected for this purpose. She, therefore, under Divine direction, sent for BARAK, a brave young prince of the tribe of Naphtali, and informed him that it was the pleasure of the Almighty that he should collect an army of ten thousand men of the tribe of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards Mount Tabor, there to encounter their oppressors; and, in order to encourage the young hero, she, at the same time, informed him, that God had assured her that Sisera, with his whole army and chariots of war, should fall into his hands, and the Canaanites be utterly vanquished.

Barak readily consented to enter upon this great and important enterprize; but, for the encouragement of his soldiers, and the convenience of consultation in case of emergency, he requested Deborah to accompany him. This the Prophetess willingly consented to do; and, as Barak's residence was at Kedesh, they at once proceeded thither, and, having soon raised the army required from the tribes mentioned, they, without delay, marched to Mount Tabor. This comparatively large armed band of Israelites soon attracted the attention of their oppressors; and information of its movements being communicated to Sisera, he immediately drew out his forces, and, taking with him his nine hundred iron chariots, marched, with the greatest expedition, from Harosheth, the place of his abode, to the foot of Mount Tabor, where the army halted, with the view of cutting off Barak's retreat.

Barak, as was very natural, was greatly alarmed at the formidable appearance of Sisera's army; but his fears were soon removed by Deborah, who again assured him of success, and advised him not to wait for Sisera's approach, but, at the dawn of the following morning, to fall upon him suddenly and unexpectedly. Barak, following these directions, attacked the enemy with such fury, that the whole Canaanitish army was immediately thrown into the utmost confusion; and so complete was the success of the Israelites, that Sisera alone escaped the general carnage. From the field of battle he fled, not knowing whither, and finally reached the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, where he found a temporary shelter. In order, however, to ingratiate herself with Barak, the conqueror, she embraced an opportunity which soon after offered, to murder Sisera, by driving a large tent-nail into his temple while he lay asleep in an inner apartment of her dwelling.

This important victory, with the successes which speedily followed it, put an end to the oppression of the Israelites for forty years; and, in commemoration of so remarkable an instance of Divine interposition, Deborah composed a triumphal song, in which she beautifully magnifies the greatness of the deliverance thus wrought for Israel, by recounting the many calamities under which they had previously labored. This fine ode is contained in the fifth chapter of the book of Judges.

While the Israelites were in the full enjoyment of the liberty, peace, and plenty to which they were restored through the agency of Deborah and Barak, their felicity was interrupted by one of the most dreadful famines on record. This famine raged with such violence as to carry off, in a short time, great numbers of the people; and, during its prevalence, many of the most distinguished fami

lies left the country, and sought relief among the surrounding nations.

Of those that, on this occasion, quitted their abodes, was Elimelech, a citizen of Bethlehem, who, accompanied by Naomi his wife, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, removed to the land of Moab. Here Elimelech soon after died, and left Naomi and her two sons strangers in a strange land; but the sons, after the death of their father, married two of the daughters of Moab, Orpah and Ruth—the former becoming the wife of Chilion, and the latter, the wife of Mahlon. From this period, for ten years, Naomi and her family continued to dwell in Moab very happily together; but at the expiration of that time, she had the misfortune to lose her sons also; and thus deprived of both her husband and her children, she could with no satisfaction to herself continue longer in a land where such severe calamities had overtaken her. She resolved, therefore, to return at once into her own country; and this resolution was confirmed by the intelligence that the famine in Canaan had ceased.

Naomi had no sooner formed the design of returning to her native land, than she communicated her purpose to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth; but they, not being willing to be separated from a parent to whom they had become so fondly attached, resolved to accompany her. The three widows, therefore, set out on their journey together; but they had not gone far before Naomi, reflecting, perhaps on the uncertainty of their future prospects, entreated Orpah and Ruth to leave her to pursue her journey alone, and to return, themselves, to their own homes, and their kindred. With Orpah the entreaties of Naomi finally prevailed; and she, therefore, after taking an affectionate leave of her mother-in-law, left her and returned to her home. But Ruth, when again urged by Naomi to pursue the

same course, instead of following the example of her sister-in-law, exclaimed in the fullness of her heart, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Naomi, perceiving from this fervent address, that the pious resolution of Ruth to accompany her, was fixed, pressed her no farther to return; but taking her with her, they proceeded on their journey towards the land of Judah. As they entered the city of Bethlehem, Naomi was immediately recognized by some of her old neighbors; and approaching her, they inquired, "Is this Naomi?" When the disconsolate widow heard her former associates address her by this name, which signifies *pleasant*, she replied with deep emotion, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara," the meaning of which is *bitter;* "for," said she, "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

Naomi and Ruth happened to arrive in Bethlehem just at the time of harvest; and as they were entirely destitute of the ordinary means of subsistence, the latter, in order to obtain sustenance for her mother-in-law and herself, proposed to go into the field of Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of Elimelech, the deceased husband of Naomi, and glean some corn. A short time after Ruth had entered the field, she was accosted by the overseer of Boaz, who inquired who she was, and whence she came; and while she was rehearsing her own history, and that of her mother-in-law, Naomi, Boaz himself approached them; and, hav

ing already heard the story of his kinswoman's return from the land of Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, he directed his reapers not only not to molest her, but to allow her to gather where she pleased, and to supply her with food and water from their own stores.

With this unexpected civility and distinguished kindness from so eminent a personage as Boaz, Ruth was deeply affected; and "she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger. And Boaz answered, and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law, since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust."

When Boaz left the field to return to the city, he gave his reapers particular directions not only to treat Ruth with great civility, but, that her gleaning might be the more successful, he ordered them purposely to drop corn in her way as she passed. By this means the quantity of corn which she gathered during the day became so great, that when she returned to Naomi in the evening, bearing with her the fruits of her toil, the latter, in utter amazement, inquired of her how it had happened that she had been so successful. Ruth, in reply, informed her mother-in-law in whose field she had been gleaning, and then proceeded to relate every particular circumstance that had occurred during her absence. On hearing these particulars, Naomi advised Ruth to visit the same field daily, and continue to glean there until the harvest should close;

and the quantity of corn which they thus obtained was so great as to afford ample provisions for the season.

When Naomi came to reflect upon all these circumstances, she at once began to entertain the hope that, notwithstanding their depressed condition, God had designed that her amiable and affectionate daughter-in-law should become the wife of her distinguished kinsman. Anxious that so desirable an event might be speedily brought about, she naturally adopted such means to facilitate it as were laudable and proper. It was at that time customary among the Israelites, to celebrate, at the end of the harvest, a feast, at which the master freely associated with his servants, and ate and drank with them in the most familiar and friendly manner.

Taking advantage of this practice, Naomi arranged matters so as to introduce Ruth, at the end of Boaz's feast, into his presence, under such circumstances as would be most grateful to his exalted rank, and consistent with his affinity to her as a kinsman. When Boaz beheld Ruth thus in his presence, both his compassion and his affection were at once elicited in her favor; and his sympathy, as was natural, soon growing into a devoted attachment, he solicited and obtained her of Naomi as his wife. Thus the Almighty, by means entirely inscrutable to us, effected his own grand and mysterious purpose; for, from the union of Boaz and Ruth descended Obed, the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David, of whom, according to the flesh, came Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

SECTION IV.

Israel oppressed by the Midianites—Appointment of GIDEON as their Deliverer—Attested by remarkable Miracles—Destroys the Altars of Baal—Collects his Forces—By Divine Direction dismisses all except Three Hundred—Encouraged by a Dream heard in the Enemy's camp—The Enemy thrown into Confusion and slay each other—Complaint of Ephraim—The Golden Ephod—Treachery and Cruelty of ABIMELECH—TOLA and JAIR judge Israel.

DURING the wise and virtuous administration of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites enjoyed those blessings of peace and prosperity, which uniformly attended their obedience to the Divine will; but soon after the death of their leaders, they again returned to their wicked and impious practices, in consequence of which, the Almighty, as a just punishment for their sins, delivered them once more into the hands of their enemies.

The Midianites, the people who next oppressed the Israelites, dwelt east of the river Jordan, and had been nearly two hundred years before almost totally destroyed by the latter, when they were on their way to the land of Canaan; but a remnant of the nation escaping into other countries, there remained until Israel became settled in the promised land, and then they returned and occupied their former possessions. These people had now become extremely numerous, and, assisted by the Amalekites, they conquered the Israelites, and kept them, for seven years, in the most abject state of subjection. The oppression of the Israelites, during the whole of this period, far surpassed anything that they had ever before endured; for, to save themselves from absolute servitude, they were compelled to flee to the mountains, and to live in fortified places and caves of the earth. As the spring approached, they would steal from their hiding places, and sow their lands; but

all was to no purpose; for, towards the time of harvest, their enemies regularly invaded their country, destroyed the productions of the earth, and killed or carried off all the cattle that fell in their way.

In this wretched condition, destitute of even the necessaries of life, the Israelites began to reflect upon their repeated transgressions, and to feel that a Divine arm alone could relieve them. They, therefore, in deep penitence for their sins, addressed their humble and fervent petitions to the Almighty, and, in answer to their prayers, God was pleased to send a prophet to expostulate with them on the wicked and ungrateful return they had made for His former favors, and to remind them that their present deplorable condition was a just punishment for their repeated disobedience to the Divine will. This expostulation made them still more sensible of the enormity of their offenses, and prepared them for the proper reception of the blessing which God was about to confer upon them, in sending them a deliverer, in the person of GIDEON, the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh.

Soon after this indication of the purpose of the Almighty to deliver the Israelites from the oppressions of the Midianites, the Angel of the Lord was sent to Gideon, who was at that time privately threshing out his corn, to inform him that God had selected him as his instrument to deliver his people from their oppressors. To this extraordinary communication, Gideon, in the utmost astonishment, replied, "If the Lord be with us, why, then, is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles, which our fathers have told us of, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." To this expostulation of Gideon, the Lord himself replied, saying, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel

from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" But Gideon, aware of his own comparative insignificance, now anxiously inquired, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Not displeased with the timidity of Gideon, and in order to assure him of entire success in this great undertaking, God now said unto him, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

This positive promise of Almighty aid, prepared Gideon, in a great measure, for his important mission; but, desirous of being assured beyond a doubt, that these communications came to him from a Divine agent, he ventured farther to propose, "If, now, I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me some sign, whereby I may know that it is thou, the Angel that talkest with me. Wherefore, depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee." To this request, the Angel immediately replied, "I will tarry till thou come;" and Gideon, accordingly, hastened to prepare a kid, and some unleavened cakes, which he spread upon a table in the Sacred presence. These the Angel ordered him to remove, and place upon an adjacent rock, and to pour the broth which he had brought with him in a small vessel, over them; and this being done, the Angel touched them with his staff, and immediately fire issued out of the rock, and completely consumed them. When Gideon beheld this miraculous display of Almighty power, he, in fear and trembling, exclaimed, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face, *I shall surely die.*" But, to remove his groundless apprehensions, "the Lord said unto him, 'Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die.'" In commemoration of this gracious interview, Gideon erected an altar on the spot where it occurred,

and called it Jehovah-Shalom, which signifies *the Lord of Peace.*

Having been thus assured that he was Divinely commissioned to deliver his countrymen from the oppressive yoke of the Midianites, Gideon, preparatory to entering upon this important enterprise, destroyed the altar of Baal, which his father had erected, and cut down the grove that surrounded it. He then built an altar to the Lord, on the top of a rock, and offered upon it, as a sacrifice, a seven-years-old bullock, from his father's stall, using the wood of the grove for the performance of the ceremony. This act of piety Gideon performed in the night, lest the people, who had now, through long practice, become wedded to their idolatry, should interfere, and prevent the execution of his pious purpose. But when the people, on the following morning, saw what Gideon had done to the altar of their favorite Baal, they assembled together and demanded the young hero of his father, that they might put him to death; but, to this demand Joash simply replied, that if Baal was a God, it was *his* business, and not *theirs*, to avenge the insult he had received. With this answer the people were satisfied, and Joash thenceforth called his son Jerub-baal, which signifies *the Opposer of Baal.*

The period of the year had now arrived, when the Midianites and their associates were accustomed to make their annual incursions into the territory of the Israelites. With this view they were assembled in vast numbers, and, passing the river Jordan, encamped in the valley of Jezreel. To meet this formidable army, Gideon immediately made preparation; and, after summoning the members of his own family to take up arms, he sent messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, exhorting them to join him in an effort to which God had called

him, to snake off the oppressive yoke of the Midianites, under which they had so long groaned. With this request, the different tribes addressed, readily complied, and immediately assembled in such numbers, that Gideon soon found himself at the head of an army amounting to thirty-two thousand men.

Anxious to satisfy his associates that he was acting under Divine directions, Gideon, as soon as his forces were assembled, begged of God to confirm his commission by some visible sign. Assured that the Almighty would graciously grant his request, he spread a fleece of wool on the ground, and, upon taking it up on the following morning, the fleece was found to be thoroughly wet with dew, while the surrounding earth remained dry. Lest a doubt of his Divine commission should still linger in any mind, Gideon requested of the Lord that the experiment might be reversed: the fleece was, accordingly, exposed for a second night, and, on the morning which followed, the ground was found to be wet, while the fleece remained entirely dry.

These specific expressions of the Divine approbation of the enterprise of Gideon, at once convinced the people that the Almighty would be with them; and they, therefore, immediately marched to meet the enemy, who still lay encamped in the plains of Jezreel. God had, however, from the beginning, designed to assume to himself the exclusive credit of the approaching triumph; and, when the army, accordingly, halted in their march, at the well of Harod, he ordered it to be proclaimed, throughout the camp, that all who felt timid or fearful, were at liberty to return to their homes. In consequence of this proclamation, twenty-two thousand quitted the expedition, leaving only ten thousand to face the foe. This number was, however, still much greater than the Almighty required for the over-

throw of the Midianites; and he, therefore, by the signal of the drinking and the lapping of water, reduced the number of Gideon's associates to only three hundred men.

With this little band, Gideon, under Divine direction, pursued his march towards the river Jordan, and halted at a short distance from the enemy's camp. While thus situated, he was in great perplexity to discover the means by which the Almighty designed that he, with a mere handful of men, should defeat the vast Midian host before him. To animate and encourage him, therefore, God directed him to take with him a single servant, and go privately to the enemy's camp, where the means he had in reserve for their destruction should be made known to him. In accordance with this direction, Gideon, during the following night, took with him his faithful servant Phurah, and, immediately after they arrived at the enemy's camp, they approached one of the tents, and heard a soldier relating to his comrades the following dream: "Behold," said he, "I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." The interpretation of this dream was immediately given by another soldier, as follows: "This," he remarked, "is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host."

This dream and its interpretation inspired Gideon with increased courage; and, after offering, in humble adoration, thanks to the Almighty, he returned to his camp, divided his little army into three companies of one hundred men each, and put them in proper order for battle. He then gave to each man a trumpet, and a pitcher with a burning torch in it, charging them to follow him, and, in every respect, to imitate his motions and actions. His

little army being thus arranged, Gideon placed himself at their head, and marched towards the enemy's camp, as soon as he had reached which, he gave the signal by breaking his pitcher, taking the lighted torch in his hand, and sounding his trumpet. All the soldiers, as had been previously concerted, followed his example, and, at the same instant exclaimed, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!"

This sudden alarm being given at the dead of night, the enemy, on hearing the sound of so many trumpets, and seeing at the same time so great a number of lights, supposed that they had been attacked by a very formidable army. Being composed of different nations, they, in the midst of their fright, could not distinguish one party from another; and, therefore, instead of falling upon the Israelites, they attacked each other in so indiscriminate a manner, that the whole scene became one of complicated confusion. Gideon, seizing the advantage which this general disorder of the enemy afforded, immediately pressed upon them with such energy, that multitudes of them were slain on the spot, while the rest had recourse to a precipitate flight. As soon as opportunity offered, Gideon sent orders to that part of his army which had withdrawn under his last proclamation, to attack the enemy who remained in the rear, while he, with his three hundred immediate followers, pursued those who fled beyond the Jordan.

The Midianites whom Gideon, with his fearless little band, thus pursued, amounted to fifteen thousand men, and were led by their two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. Being considerably in advance of Gideon's forces, the Midianites succeeded in reaching, in safety, the distant city of Karkor, where, supposing themselves entirely beyond the reach of danger, they rested in thoughtless security. While thus off their guard, Gideon came upon them unexpectedly,

and attacking them suddenly, defeated, with the utmost ease the whole army, and captured their two kings. The lives of the kings, he designed to spare; but, having learned by their own confession, that they had slain his brethren at Tabor, and laid waste the country through which they had passed, he immediately stripped them of their royal robes and ornaments, and put them to death. He also punished the men of Succoth and Penuel with great severity, for having refused him and his followers succor while exhausted by hunger and fatigue during their pursuit of the enemy.

While Gideon was thus pursuing the Midianites who had escaped beyond the river Jordan, the part of the army that did not accompany him, completely extirpated the enemy whom he had left behind; and their two kings, Oreb and Zeeb, being found among the slain, their heads were cut off and sent to Gideon, as evidence of the completeness of the victory. The Ephraimites, however, expressed great dissatisfaction with him, for having engaged in a public act of hostility without their knowledge; but when Gideon informed them, that he had acted in conformity to the command of God, and that therefore, he did not claim the merit of the victory he had obtained, for himself, they were not only appeased, but entirely satisfied.

Thus were the combined armies of Midian and Amalek totally overthrown, and the Israelites once more relieved from their wretched state of bondage. These great and glorious actions, in defense of the liberty of their country, gave to Gideon such unbounded popularity, that the whole nation, with one voice, desired to settle the government permanently upon himself and his family. But Gideon, fully aware that all the honor of this signal triumph over their enemies belonged exclusively to the Almighty, modestly replied to this generous offer, "I will

not rule over you, neither shall my son; but the Lord shall rule over you." He requested his soldiers, however, to give him, as an expression of their gratitude for the share he had taken in their recent victories, the ear-rings found among the spoils of the foe. With this request they readily complied, saying, "We willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein, every man, the ear-rings of his prey; and the weight of the ear-rings was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold, besides ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment, that was on the kings of Midian, and the chains that were on their camels' necks."

Of the gold thus received, Gideon made an ephod, or outer garment worn by the priest upon his shoulders, together with all the sacred ornaments which necessarily belong to it, and placed it in the city of Ophrah, as a monument of his extraordinary victory. This ephod afterwards became a snare, not only to Gideon himself, but also to all Israel; for, from their fixed idolatrous habits, they soon transferred to it that worship which was due alone to their Maker.

For forty years after the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Midian oppression through the agency of Gideon, the people enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity; and at his death, which occurred when he was far advanced in life, he left, by his various wives, the unprecedented number of seventy sons, besides Abimelech, who was born of a concubine of Shechem. The latter, having no right to share with Gideon's lawful children the inheritance of their father, resolved to provide for himself by removing them out of his way. With this view he repaired to Shechem, the place of residence of the family of his mother, and there found little difficulty in collecting together a band of desperadoes like himself, at

the head of whom he returned to Ophrah, and, seizing all the lawful sons of Gideon, excepting Jotham, who effected his escape, he put them at once to death.

Abimelech had no sooner committed this diabolical act, than he returned to Shechem, and, notwithstanding the enormity of his crime, was at once elected, by a general assembly of the Shechemites, their king. When Jotham heard of the advancement of Abimelech to kingly power by the inhabitants of Shechem, he immediately repaired to mount Gerizim, in the vicinity of that city, and there delivered a parabolical address, in which he represented to the people his father's modesty in refusing to allow them to settle the government upon him and his family, which they had now conferred upon one as much inferior, in virtue and honor, to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble was inferior to the olive-tree, the fig-tree, or the vine. This parable is found in the ninth chapter of the *Book of Judges*, and is remarkable for being the first instance of that kind of writing on record. After delivering this parable, and the remarks which accompanied it, to the people, Jotham retired to Beer, a city situated on the northern border of the territory of the tribe of Judah, and there passed the remainder of his life.

Abimelech ruled the Shechemites in so arbitrary and tyrannical a manner, that, after a reign of three years, they expelled him from Shechem, and conferred the government upon Gaal, a prince of the country, who, attended by a body of armed men, had recently removed to the city. Abimelech found means, however, after a brief absence, to regain his authority; and, in retaliation for his expulsion, he put the greater part of the inhabitants to the sword, demolished the city, and, as the last act of indignity, caused salt to be sown upon the foundation of the city walls—thus indicating that the people had been guilty of

treachery. Those of the Shechemites who escaped the rage of the tyrant in the city, took refuge in a stronghold belonging to their idol Berith. Thither Abimelech pursued them; and having set fire to the place of their retreat, they all perished in the flames.

Even this last act of cruelty did not satiate Abimelech's implacable revenge; and he, therefore, next marched against the neighboring city of Thebez, the inhabitants of which, being few in number, took refuge in the city tower. Entering the place without opposition, Abimelech immediately led his men to the base of the tower, and while he was standing under its walls, revolving in his mind the means by which he might most readily destroy it, one of the women who had fled thither for safety, let fall a piece of mill-stone upon his head with such force that it immediately prostrated him upon the ground. Awaking soon after to consciousness, and perceiving that his wound was mortal, he ordered his armor-bearer to dispatch him at once, lest it should be said that he had been slain by a woman. "Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father's house, in slaying his seventy brethren. And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads; and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerub-baal."

Immediately after the death of Abimelech, Tola, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, became Judge of Israel, and held his office for twenty-three years. During the whole of this period, he resided at Shamir, on mount Ephraim; but of his character and achievements, nothing farther is related than that he administered the government successfully, and, at his death, was buried in the place of his abode.

Tola was succeeded in the government by Jair, a Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh. He was a man of extensive

possessions and numerous family—having no less than thirty sons and thirty daughters. Each of his sons had an independent government—being at the head of the respective city in which he resided; and they all, like their father, were men of great courage, and universally esteemed by the people. Jair judged Israel twenty-two years, and, dying at an advanced age, was buried at Camon, a city of Gilead.

SECTION V.

Israel, after Ninety Years of Prosperity, brought under the Yoke of the Philistines and Ammonites—Early Life of JEPHTHAH—Made Judge of Israel—His rash Vow—The Sacrifice of his Daughter, the Consequence—Triumphs over the Enemies of Israel—His Death—Succeeded by IBZAN, ELON, and ABDON—Birth of SAMSON—His Extraordinary Strength and wonderful Career—His Death and Character—A distinguished Type of Messiah.

THE ninety years that followed the deliverance of the Israelites from their oppressors, through the valor of Gideon, was, with the exception of the brief career of Abimelech, a period of uninterrupted prosperity; but, soon after the death of the pious and upright Jair, they again degenerated into their former wicked and impious practices. Their idolatry at this time surpassed any that they had indulged in during the whole of the previous period of their national existence; for they not only worshiped Baal and Ashtaroth, but they adopted also the idols of the Syrians, the Zidonians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and even the Philistines.

Reiterated offenses against their Divine benefactor, were, throughout the whole history of the Israelites, uniformly followed by reiterated judgments; and now, therefore, as on all previous occasions, when they departed from their Maker, the Almighty was pleased to teach them once more, that "the way of transgressors is hard," by bring-

ing them under the oppressive yoke of their enemies. He, accordingly, permitted the Philistines and Ammonites, not only to subdue those tribes whose inheritance lay on the east side of the river Jordan, but also to extend their conquests to the more distant tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim—all of which they subdued and kept in absolute subjection for the long and dreary period of eighteen years.

The Israelites, after many vain attempts to resist, in their own strength, the power of their oppressors, at length became sensible of the wickedness, as well as the folly by which they had provoked God thus to punish them; and having, therefore, acknowledged their sins, they humbly besought him once more to pardon them, and restore them again to his Divine favor. But the Almighty, with the utmost severity, rebuked them for their ingratitude, and, to heighten the poignancy of their present afflictions, bade them call upon the gods whom they had preferred to him, to deliver them from their calamitous condition. This cutting reproof they most sensibly felt; and in order, therefore, to recover the Divine favor and protection, they immediately removed all their idols, and, with deep and earnest penitence, returned to his service. This forsaking of their sins and penitence for them, God no sooner perceived, than he evinced his readiness to forgive them, and restore them once more to his favor, by pointing out the means through which their deliverance should be effected.

There resided, at this time, in that part of the tribe of Manasseh which had settled on the east side of the Jordan, a man of great celebrity, whose name was Gilead. He was descended from that Machir to whom Moses gave the city of Gilead, at the time of the conquest of the country; and, besides a numerous family of legitimate children, he had

one son, named JEPHTHAH, by a concubine. Jephthah, not being entitled to any part of his father's possessions, was expelled by his brethren, from the family, soon after his father's death; and thus cast upon the world, he, after various wanderings, finally settled in the land of Tob, in the northern part of Arabia. Naturally possessed of great courage and intrepidity, and, withal, of winning address, he soon collected a small band of followers around him, at the head of whom he made frequent incursions into the enemy's country, whence he carried off very considerable spoils.

While Jephthah was thus engaged in these predatory expeditions, the Ammonites collected a large army for the purpose of invading Gilead, and laying siege to the capital. The Gileadites had now, however, with all the rest of Israel, acquired sufficient spirit to resolve no longer tamely to submit to their oppressors, and they, therefore, hastily brought together all the forces they could muster, and encamped at Mizpeh. But the Almighty had not yet designated their leader, and they were, therefore, for some time, greatly perplexed to determine upon whom to confer the office of general. At length, however, they thought of Jephthah, and, being familiar with the manner in which he had recently, on various occasions, signalized himself against the enemy, they dispatched messengers to him, to offer him the command of the army. Without any preparatory steps, these messengers, as soon as they came into the presence of Jephthah, said to him, "Come and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon." To this invitation from the elders of Gilead, Jephthah haughtily replied, "Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? And why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" Evading these taunting inquiries of Jephthah, the elders of Gilead

not only assured him that they were anxious to have him become their leader, but even confirmed their declaration by a solemn oath, saying, "The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words." Being thus assured of the earnestness and sincerity of the Gileadites, Jephthah at length consented to assume the charge of the war against the Ammonites; and the people having made him "head and captain over them," he immediately repaired to Mizpeh, where, in the presence of the Almighty, the solemn engagement into which they had mutually entered, was fully ratified.

Jephthah being thus invested with the government and command of the Gileadites, sent messengers from Mizpeh to the king of the Ammonites, to demand the reason why he had invaded their country. To this demand the king of Ammon replied, that the land belonged to him, and not to the Gileadites—that the Israelites, in their march from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, and that he was resolved to recover it. Jephthah, still anxious to avoid a hostile meeting, sent a second message to the king of Ammon, in which he expostulated with him on the unjustness of his claim to the country, as the Israelites took it originally from the Amorites, and the Gileadites had enjoyed the quiet possession of it for more than three hundred years. The haughty reply which the king of the Ammonites returned to this message, brought matters to a crisis; and Jephthah, perceiving that all farther remonstrance would be fruitless, immediately prepared for the conflict.

Having marshalled his army, Jephthah placed himself at their head, and at once advanced towards that of the Ammonites. Halting near the army of the enemy, he offered a devout and fervent supplication to the Almighty for success, closing his prayer with the following extraordinary

vow: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, *or* I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." A desperate battle between the contending parties immediately followed this solemn vow, in the course of which the Ammonites were totally routed, vast numbers of them being slain on the field, while those who attempted to save themselves by flight were hotly pursued, overtaken, and all put to the sword. Animated by the success of this first action, Jephthah pushed forward his conquests, and destroyed, in rapid succession, twenty cities of the Ammonites, with all their inhabitants, laying waste the whole country wherever he went.

The power of the Ammonites being thus destroyed, and the Israelites happily extricated out of all their troubles, and relieved from the oppressive burthens under which they had so long groaned, Jephthah returned in triumph to his own country, and was received with acclamations of joy throughout the land.

Jephthah, having received the general congratulations of the Gileadites, hastened to his own house, on approaching which, his daughter, an only child, joyfully came forth to meet him. "And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, 'Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' And she said unto him, 'My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee on thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.' And she said unto her father, 'Let this thing be done for

me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity: I and my fellows.' And he said, 'Go.' And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly *to talk with* the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year." The deep affliction of Jephthah upon this occasion, arose from the consideration, that his daughter's being thus devoted to perpetual virginity, removed from him all hopes of posterity, and that, with his own death, therefore, his name must perish from the earth—a calamity than which an Israelite could scarcely suffer a greater.

Jephthah having thus delivered the country of Gilead, the possession of the Reubenites, from the oppression of the Ammonites, was prepared to enjoy the fruits of his victory in peace, when a new trouble arose which he had little anticipated. The Ephraimites, a quarrelsome and ambitious people, jealous of the great fame which Jephthah had acquired by subduing the Ammonites, insolently demanded to know why he had undertaken the war without consulting them, intimating, at the same time, that should his answer not be satisfactory, they would invade Gilead, set fire to his house, and consume him and his family in the flames. To this arrogant demand, Jephthah replied, that they could not be ignorant of the oppression which the Gileadites had so long suffered, and that they had in vain applied to their allies to aid them in endeavoring to relieve themselves of the burthen which they had been compelled to bear; that now, however, they were free; and should the Ephraimites attempt to disturb their

repose, they were prepared to treat them as they had treated the common enemy of their country.

This remonstrance and threat of Jephthah served only to inflame the pride and anger of the Ephraimites; and they, therefore, immediately collected their forces, and prepared for battle. Aware of these preparations, Jephthah at once marshalled his troops, and marched out to meet the Ephraimites; and, in the desperate conflict that followed, the latter were completely overthrown; great numbers of them perished on the field of battle, whilst the rest were all put to flight. To secure the advantage of the triumph thus obtained, Jephthah ordered all the passes of the river Jordan to be guarded, and such of the Ephraimites as should attempt to ford the stream to be immediately put to death. That those who were appointed to watch the passes might be able to detect an Ephraimite, when he came to the river to cross, every passenger was required to pronounce the word *Shibboleth*—the sound of the *h* in the first syllable of which, being uniformly omitted by the whole tribe of Ephraim. By this means so many of the Ephraimites were seized and put to death, that the number that perished in this manner, and in the recent action, amounted to forty-two thousand.

Jephthah having thus, through Divine assistance, signalized his valor in a series of the most remarkable successes, returned in triumph to Gilead, where he passed the remainder of his life in peace and tranquillity. From that time he successfully administered the government of Israel for six years, at the end of which he died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead, his native country.

Of the three judges, IBZAN, ELON, and ABDON, who succeeded Jephthah, very little is known, farther than that, during their administration, the Israelites enjoyed continuous peace and prosperity.

Ibzan was of the tribe of Judah, and a native of the city of Bethlehem. He had thirty sons and thirty daughters, and discharged the duties of his exalted office for seven years with great fidelity and success. At his death, which occurred when he was far advanced in life, he was buried in Bethlehem, his native city.

Elon, the successor of Ibzan, was of the tribe of Zebulun; but, during his government, which lasted two years, nothing material occurred. The place of his burial was Ajalon, one of the chief cities of his native tribe.

Abdon, the son of Hillel, and the successor of Elon, was of the tribe of Ephraim, and was greatly beloved by the people. He was far advanced in life when he became judge; and after having governed the people eight years, he died, and was buried with unusual pomp and ceremony in his native place, the city of Pirathon. Abdon left at his death forty sons and thirty nephews.

After the death of the last of the three excellent judges whom we have thus briefly noticed, the Israelites, being again left without the authority of a visible leader, relapsed into their old impieties, in consequence of which, the Almighty permitted the Philistines to invade and conquer their territory, and to keep the people, for the space of forty years, in the most abject state of servitude. At the expiration of that time, the following extraordinary incidents occurred, and in the event, happily wrought out Israel's deliverance:

A certain man, named Manoah, of the tribe of Dan, had lived many years in a state of wedlock with his wife, but they still remained childless. At length, their anxiety for offspring became so great and distressing, that they unitedly supplicated the Almighty to bestow upon them a child. To their petition God was pleased to listen; and he accordingly sent his angel to the woman, saying unto her,

"Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazarite from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines." This pleasing announcement Manoah's wife no sooner heard, than she hastened to her husband to impart the welcome intelligence to him; upon hearing which, he earnestly prayed that the gracious message might be repeated. When, however, in compliance with his request, the heavenly messenger, in the presence of both himself and his wife, repeated the announcement, they were overwhelmed with the awful consciousness, that they had been conversing with a messenger sent from the Almighty; and, prostrating themselves upon the earth, Manoah exclaimed, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." His wife, however, more courageous and composed, replied, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these."

At the appointed period, the promised son was born, and Manoah called his name SAMSON, which signifies *strong*. At this time, the intercourse of the Israelites and the Philistines with each other, had became so familiar, that the former lost, comparatively, the consciousness of their degradation, and intermarriages between the two nations were, consequently, a matter of frequent occurrence. Samson, meantime, reached the age of maturity, and, visiting the Philistine city, Timnath, he there saw, and soon after became betrothed to the daughter of one of the most distinguished citizens of that place. On his return home he informed his parents of all that had passed during his absence, and of the engagement into which he had entered with the daughter of the Philistine.

Aware, as Samson's parents were, that God designed to effect the deliverance of Israel through the agency of their

son, they earnestly remonstrated with him on the impropriety of the alliance he proposed to form. Their remonstrances, however, all proving ineffectual, they finally consented to accompany him to Timnath, there to witness the consummation of his most ardent wishes, in the arrangement of a marriage contract. On their way thither Samson gave an earnest of that extraordinary personal strength which afterwards became his most striking characteristic. Unarmed and alone, he attacked and slew a ravenous lion, and cast his carcase into a ditch. Some time after, as, with his parents, he was going by the same road to Timnath to celebrate his marriage, he recollected the incident of his struggle with the lion, and, turning aside to examine the carcase, he was astonished to find it occupied by a swarm of bees, and filled with honey. Taking out some pieces of the honey-comb, to refresh himself on his way, he resumed his journey; and when he overtook his parents, who had gone on in advance of him, he imparted of the delicious fare to them, without informing them where he had obtained it.

Immediately after the arrival of Samson and his party at Timnath, the marriage ceremony was, with great splendor, performed; and, to heighten the seven days' rejoicing on the occasion, thirty young Philistines had been invited by Samson's father-in-law, to attend as his associates. At the close of the first day, while hilarity and unbounded enjoyment prevailed, Samson proposed to his young companions a riddle—offering, at the same time, should they be able to solve it, a complete change of raiment to each of them—and claiming, should they fail in their solution, a change from each in return. To this proposal they readily acceded; when Samson announced for the trial of their skill, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." The young Philistines,

for the first six days, endeavored in vain to solve the riddle; and, not to be baffled, they, on the morning of the seventh day, secretly threatened Samson's wife, that, should she not obtain from him the solution, and communicate it to them, they would set fire to the house, and consume both herself and her father in the flames. This threat had the desired effect: by her entreaties she drew from Samson the story of the lion and the honey, and communicated it to them; and when the evening of the day arrived, one of the company, in behalf of himself and his associates, gave, as the solution to the riddle: "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?"

Indignant at the manner in which he had been overreached, Samson immediately replied, "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." But notwithstanding the deception thus passed upon him, he resolved still to be faithful to his engagement. "And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle."

Having thus literally discharged his obligation to the young Philistines, Samson suddenly left his wife at Timnath, and went home to his father's house. But his anger for the wrong that had been done him by the Philistines soon subsiding, his affection for his wife returned in all its strength; and he now, therefore, hastened to her father's house, to renew the expressions of his attachment to her. He had, however, no sooner arrived at Timnath, than he was informed that his wife had been given, during his absence, to the one of the thirty young Philistines who had expounded his riddle.

This base treatment Samson did not attribute so much

to the want of faithfulness on the part of his father-in-law, as to a fixed purpose of the Philistines to insult and injure him; and he resolved, therefore, to be revenged on the whole nation. The Philistine harvest being now ripe, and the corn ready to be gathered, he took three hundred foxes, and, tying them together by the tails, in pairs, he placed a lighted torch between each pair, and turned them all into the open fields. The foxes, in alarm, ran in every direction; and thus setting fire, not only to the corn, but also to the vines and olive trees, soon desolated all the surrounding country.

The Philistines who had suffered in this general destruction of their property, understanding that Samson was the author of it, and that he had been induced to take this method of revenging himself for the insult which he had received from his wife's family, immediately hastened to Timnath, and regarding his wife and her father as the original cause of this great calamity, at once seized and burned them alive. This cruel treatment of a wife whom he still dearly loved, only irritated Samson the more against the Philistines; and he, therefore, immediately fell upon a large body of them, exhibiting such prodigious strength, and so great activity, that but few escaped with their lives. Conscious that so rigorous a procedure would only farther inflame the already incensed Philistines, he fled into the country of Judah, and took refuge on the top of the rock Etam—a stronghold which could be approached by one path only, and that so narrow as not to admit two persons abreast.

Samson's retreat soon becoming known to the Philistines, they pursued him thither; and halting at Lehi they sent a body of three thousand of his countrymen to Etam, to take him prisoner, and deliver him into their hands. As soon as the men of Judah came into the presence of

Samson, they, through fear of their oppressors, began to expostulate with him, saying, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done unto us?" To this expostulation, Samson simply replied, "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." He permitted himself, however, to be bound with cords, and taken to the Philistines; but he had no sooner reached their camp, and heard their shoutings at his captivity, than "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith."

This prodigious slaughter of their countrymen so intimidated the rest of the Philistine army, that, instead of attempting to resist the power of Samson's single arm, they immediately sought safety in flight. The fatigue which followed this wonderful effort against the Philistines, prostrated Samson to the earth; and being "sore athirst, he called unto the Lord and said: Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant, and now shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" But God soon relieved his distress, by miraculously causing water to flow copiously forth from an adjacent rock. And Samson called that place En-hakkore, *or the well of him that called.*

This wonderful display of personal prowess by Samson, wrought out the complete deliverance of the Israelites from Philistine oppression; and thenceforth he, for many years, judged the people with entire success. He was from his youth, however, of a roving disposition; and having, on one occasion, entered the city of Gaza, he was soon recognized by the governor, who determined to have

him seized and put to death. With this view he ordered the city guards, should Samson attempt to leave the city during the night, to capture and confine him; but he baffled the governor's design, by rising at midnight, going to the gates of the city and taking them, together with the posts and the bars that fastened them, upon his shoulders, he carrried the whole "to the top of a hill that is before Hebron," and there left them in full view of both cities.

In the latter part of his life, Samson permitted himself to fall in love with Delilah, a beautiful woman, dwelling in the vale of Sorek. This unfortunate amour cost him both his liberty and his life; for, having revealed to her that the secret of his strength lay in the preservation of his hair, she embraced the opportunity, while he was asleep, to have his hair cut off, and in this hapless condition delivered him into the hands of the Philistines. The Philistines first put out his eyes, and then conducted him to Gaza, where they confined him in prison, and compelled him to grind corn at a hand-mill, like a common slave. Having now in their possession their dreaded and most inveterate enemy, the Philistines appointed a certain day on which all the princes, nobility, and heads of the people were to assemble together at Gaza, to return thanks to their god Dagon, for delivering Samson into their hands.

In the mean time, Samson's hair grew out again, and with its growth all his former strength returned; but the Philistines, not aware of this circumstance, resolved, in the midst of their rejoicings, to divert themselves at his expense. With this view they brought him forth out of his prison, and placed him in the midst of the spacious hall in which they were assembled, and, as he leaned against the two columns by which the building was chiefly supported, he earnestly prayed to the Almighty, saying,

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once revenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." Having prayed thus, Samson grasped the two principal columns of the building, one with each arm, and exclaiming, "Let me die with the Philistines," put forth such prodigious strength, that he forced the columns from their basis, and the whole building immediately fell to the ground, burying Samson himself, together with three thousand of the Philistines, under its ruins. When his relations heard of his death, they came down to Gaza, obtained his body, and buried it in the tomb of his ancestors.

Thus fell Samson, after having judged Israel twenty years; and when we reflect that he was raised up by God, for the especial purpose of punishing the Philistines, we cannot regard his death otherwise than heroic. But, as he was called and sanctified from his birth, and set apart to deliver, by his personal strength alone, and almost without the aid of weapons, the Israelites out of the hands of their enemies, he assumes another aspect, and becomes a singular and most significant type of the Messiah.

SECTION VI.

ELI, High-priest and Judge—Birth of SAMUEL—Dedicated to the Service of the Almighty—The Sons of ELI rejected from the Priestly Office—God appears to SAMUEL in the night—Sends a Message by Him to ELI—SAMUEL established as a Prophet of the Lord—The Ark captured by the Philistines, and the Sons of ELI slain—Death of ELI—The Ark restored, and SAMUEL judges Israel—Defeat of the Philistines—The Sons of SAMUEL associated with him in the Government—Their unworthy Character—The Government changed to a Monarchy.

DURING the greater part of the eventful life of Samson, Eli filled the office of high-priest, and on the death of that distinguished hero, the latter added to his priestly dignity

that of ruler, also, of the people. This important event occurred when Eli was fifty-eight years of age; and, though the government remained in his hands forty years, yet his administration was much less prosperous and happy than had been the administration of any of his predecessors.

The first important event that occurred after Eli became judge of Israel, was the birth of the prophet Samuel. Elkanah, of the city of Ramah, and of the tribe of Ephraim, had, as was at that time a common custom among the Israelites, two wives, Hannah and Peninnah; and while the latter brought him numerous offspring, the former remained childless. This was a source of deep and constant grief to Hannah; and, therefore, on one occasion, when she went up to Shiloh with her husband, to present their yearly sacrifice before the Lord, she repaired to the Tabernacle, at the door of which sat Eli, the high-priest, and there falling upon her knees, she prayed with the utmost earnestness, that God would remove the cause of her affliction, by blessing her with a son—promising that, should her request be granted, she would dedicate his life to the Lord, and *no razor should come upon his head.*

Eli, from the peculiar attitude of Hannah, and from the motion of her lips, unaccompanied by words, supposed she was intoxicated; and he, therefore, rebuked her, saying, "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee." To this severe rebuke Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." Eli no sooner perceived, from this reply, that he had mistaken the character of Hannah, than he turned his reproach into a blessing,

saying unto her, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him." The benediction thus pronounced upon her by the high-priest, and his prayer for the success of her petition, entirely removed the burthen from Hannah's heart; and she, therefore, returned from the Tabernacle to Elkanah, her husband, with a countenance from which all traces of sadness were removed.

Their closing devotions at Shiloh having been performed, Elkanah and his family returned to Ramah, and in due course of time Hannah gave birth to a son, whom she called Samuel, which signifies, *asked of the Lord.* Faithful to her promise, Hannah, as soon as her son had arrived at a suitable age to be separated from his mother, repaired, with her husband and family, to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and there, presenting the child to Eli, the high-priest, solemnly dedicated him to the service of the Almighty. It was on this occasion that Hannah composed and sung, in the presence of Eli and the other priests of the Tabernacle, that beautiful hymn of thanksgiving which is found in the beginning of the second chapter of the first Book of Samuel.

The vow of Hannah having been thus performed, in the public dedication of the child Samuel to the service of the Almighty, she, with her husband, prepared to return to Ramah; but, before they departed, Eli pronounced a blessing upon them, saying to Elkanah, "The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord." He then, in their presence, clothed Samuel in a habit suited to his new situation, and placed over his dress a linen ephod, that he might at once enter upon the service of the Tabernacle. Elkanah and Hannah immediately after departed for their home, and, in the course of a few years, realized the fruits of the blessing of the high-priest, in the birth of three sons and two daughters.

The treasure which the parents of Samuel had committed to the custody of the high-priest Eli, was guarded by him with the utmost care; and the early development of the child's character, consequently, evinced the anxiety and attention which his education and training must have elicited. His amiable deportment and intelligent mind soon, indeed, rendered him a universal favorite, and formed a striking contrast with Eli's own sons, Hophni and Phineas, both of whom, notwithstanding their exalted station, were libertines. The outrageous treatment which both men and women, when they came to the Tabernacle to offer their oblations, received from these base priests, soon brought even religion itself into contempt; and the worship of the Almighty, consequently, fell into general disuse. Of the depravity of his sons, and of their wicked conduct, Eli was not ignorant; and, therefore, because he did not punish them as they deserved, God sent a prophet to him to announce the ejection of his family from the priestly office, and their utter destruction.

Soon after this awful denunciation was pronounced upon the family of Eli by the strange prophet, God appeared to the youthful Samuel under circumstances of peculiar interest. He was alone in the apartment of the Tabernacle in which he lodged, and, soon after he had retired to rest, he heard the voice of the Almighty calling him distinctly by his name. Mistaking the voice for that of the high-priest, he immediately, in accordance with the custom of the age, answered, "*Here am I*," and then hastened to the apartment of Eli to know his pleasure. Eli, surprised at this singular incident, told Samuel that he had not only not called him, but had not even mentioned his name since they had last met. Supposing, therefore, that he had been mistaken, Samuel returned to his lodging room, and retired again to rest; but, to his utter astonishment, the

same voice again called him three times. Assured that he could not possibly be now mistaken, Samuel once more repaired to Eli, and told him that the call had been repeated; upon which the high-priest, knowing that the voice must have proceeded from heaven, directed Samuel to retire again to rest, and should the voice be repeated, to answer, "*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*"

Samuel had no sooner retired again to rest, than the call of the Almighty came a third time to him, and, replying to it in accordance with the direction of Eli, he received the following awful communication respecting the high-priest and his family: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken against his house. When I begin I will make an end, for I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. And, therefore, I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever." This sentence was so terrible, that Samuel, for some time, hesitated to acquaint Eli with it; but at length, urged by the high-priest, he communicated to him the message, without the least reserve; when Eli heard which, he, in entire resignation to the Divine will, meekly replied, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

Soon after this first revelation of the Almighty to Samuel, he appeared again to him at Shiloh; and, thenceforth, "all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord;" and all his communications to the people were, therefore, received with implicit confidence. Indeed, prophetic revelations had now, for many years, been so rarely made to

the Israelites, that when they found that God had really appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they greatly rejoiced, imagining that whatever they should undertake in future, must necessarily be attended with success. Under this delusion, they resolved to rescue themselves, at once, out of the hands of the Philistines; and, with this view, they immediately marched their forces from Shiloh, and encamped at a place afterwards called Ebenezer.

The Philistines, perceiving the movements of the Israelites, also prepared for the conflict, and, leading forth their army, they encamped at Aphek, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah. On the following day the two armies met, and a desperate battle ensued, in which four thousand of the Israelites fell, and the rest were put to flight. Imputing this defeat, however, to the absence of the Ark of the Lord, they immediately dispatched messengers to Hophni and Phineas, requesting them to hasten to the army, and to bring the Ark with them. The joy of the Israelitish army on the reception of the Ark in the camp, was unbounded; and they, therefore, immediately attacked the Philistines with the utmost fury. The result, however, proved fatal to them; for, no less than thirty thousand of them, among whom were Hophni and Phineas, were left dead on the field of battle, and the sacred Ark itself fell into the hands of the enemy.

When intelligence of this fatal overthrow of their army reached Shiloh, all Israel was at once thrown into a state of the utmost consternation. Eli, the high-priest, however, regarded the disaster as a merited punishment from the Lord, and received even the news of the death of his two sons in meek submission to the Divine will. But when he was informed that the Ark of the Lord had been captured by the Philistines, "he fell from his seat backward, by the

side of the gate, and his neck brake and he died." Thus died Eli, the high-priest, in the ninety-eighth year of his age, after having governed Israel forty years. The wife of Phineas was also so much overcome by the intelligence of the capture of the Ark, that she gave premature birth to a son, immediately after which she expired; but, before her death, she named her child Ichabod: "For," said she, "the glory is departed from Israel; for the Ark of of God is taken."

The capture of the Ark was regarded by the Philistines as an occasion of unbounded exultation; and they, accordingly, carried it immediately after their victory in triumph to Ashdod, one of their principal cities, and placed it in the temple of Dagon, by the side of the image of the idol there worshiped. Resorting to the temple soon after, the people were surprised to find their favorite idol, not only prostrate before the Ark, but with his head and both his hands broken off; and they, therefore, at once inferred that Dagon, after all, was far inferior to the God of Israel. Of the truth of this inference, the Almighty soon made them sensible, by afflicting the people of Ashdod, and other places in the vicinity, with a loathsome disease, and also by causing mice to overrun the surrounding country in such vast numbers, that they destroyed all the fruits of the earth.

These severe inflictions of Divine wrath induced the people of Ashdod to request their leaders to cause the Ark to be removed from their city; and it was, accordingly, sent thence to the city of Gath. But as calamities similar to those with which the Ashdodites had been visited, followed the Ark to every city to which the Philistines sent it, they finally resolved, after having kept it in their possession seven months, to restore it to the Israelites. Their priests recommended them, however, not to send it back

empty, but to accompany it with a suitable trespass-offering, for the atonement of their sacrilege; that by thus acknowledging the supremacy of the God of Israel, they might hope that he would remove from them the plagues with which they had been so severely afflicted.

In accordance with the advice of the priests, a trespass-offering was prepared, consisting of five golden emerods—figures to represent the disease with which the people of Ashdod had been afflicted—and five golden mice. These being put into a box, were placed, together with the Ark, upon a cart prepared for the purpose, and, accompanied by five of their princes, were drawn by two white milch cows, that had never before been yoked together, to Beth-shemesh, one of the cities of the Levites. The Israelites received the Ark, thus restored to their possession, with the loudest acclamations of joy; and, having carefully taken it, together with the trespass-offering, from the cart that had borne them, they consumed the cart with fire, and then sacrificed the two kine as a burnt-offering to the Lord.

But the joy of the people of Bethshemesh at the restoration of the Ark, was soon turned into the deepest sorrow; for many of them, in violation of the Divine command, indulging the idle curiosity of raising the lid of that sacred vessel to look into it, were, as a just punishment of their presumption, instantly struck dead. Alarmed at this signal expression of the Divine displeasure, the people of Beth-shemesh, acknowledging their own unworthiness to retain possession of so sacred a treasure, sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying to them, "The Philistines have brought again the Ark of the Lord; come ye down and fetch it up to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the Ark of the Lord, and brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar

his son to keep the Ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the Ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord."

On the death of Eli, the prophet Samuel assumed, by Divine direction, the government of the Israelites; and, assembling the people together, he exhorted them, in the most solemn and impressive manner, to put away, at once, their strange gods, Baal and Ashtaroth, and worship only the Almighty; assuring them that, should they do this in sincerity and truth, the God of Israel would soon deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines.

To this address of Samuel, the people responded by loud acclamations, assuring him that they would thenceforth implicitly obey the Divine commands. Of this favorable disposition on the part of the multitude, Samuel immediately took advantage, and, summoning a general assembly at Mizpeh, he held "a solemn feast unto the Lord," during which the people expressed their penitence and humility, by confessing their sins, and pouring forth the most liberal libations. Pleased with the apparent sincerity of their sorrow for their past transgressions, Samuel now urged them to persevere in the reformation they had commenced, reminding them that on such perseverance alone depended their future prosperity.

While the Israelites were thus humbling themselves before their justly offended, but ever merciful Creator, the Philistines advanced with a large army towards Mizpeh, intending to attack them during their devotions, and thus taking them by surprise, overcome them before they should have an opportunity to prepare to defend themselves. When the Israelites saw them approaching, they were immediately seized with great terror; but Samuel, assured that their repentance had been sincere and thorough, bade them not

be alarmed, as God himself would defend them. He then offered in sacrifice, on behalf of the people, an immaculate lamb, and, at the same time, implored, in the most fervent and dependent manner, the Divine assistance against their enemies. This sacrifice and prayer the Almighty was pleased to accept, and, in return, he assured Samuel, that the Israelites, in the approaching contest with the Philistines, should obtain a complete victory.

While the sacrifice of the Israelites was still smoking on the altar, the army of the Philistines drew up in battle array against them; but the latter had no sooner begun the attack, than such dreadful peals of thunder, accompanied by the most vivid flashes of lightning, descended upon them from the heavens, that they were unable to use their arms; and thus thrown into the utmost terror and confusion, they all immediately betook themselves to flight. Taking advantage of the disorder of the Philistine army, the Israelites pursued them with great slaughter, as far as Bethcar, where Samuel halted, and set up a stone to commemorate the victory—calling the place Ebenezer, which signifies *the stone of help*. Following up his victory, Samuel successively attacked city after city, until he had recovered from the enemy the whole country that lay between Gath and Ekron, and which had formerly belonged to the Israelites, but had been wrested out of their hands by the Philistines.

Having thus triumphed over the most daring and powerful of the enemies of his country, Samuel restored the Israelites their recovered possessions, and then resumed his own residence at Ramah, where he soon after erected an altar to the Lord, on which he thenceforth offered his sacrifices. The source whence Samuel derived his authority for officiating in the offering of sacrifices before the Lord was, doubtless, his prophetic office; for, not

being of the family of Aaron, the act would otherwise have been a violation of the sacerdotal economy. Besides officiating as priest, Samuel now assumed the government of the people, and the administration of justice; and that he might discharge his secular and judicial duties the more successfully, he made two circuits annually through the whole country, visiting every important part of the land, and everywhere interposing his authority to prevent the violation of the laws.

When far advanced in life, and unable, from natural infirmities, longer to exert the necessary vigilance for the successful discharge of his official duties, Samuel relinquished the government in favor of his two sons, Joel and Abiah, and directed them to follow, in all things, in the administration of justice, the example which he had set them. Joel and Abiah had, however, scarcely been invested with judicial authority, before they began to give evidence of total unfitness for their exalted position; for, instead of following the example of their distinguished father, they perverted justice for gain—deciding controversies according to the value of the bribe offered, and, at the same time, giving themselves up in every other respect to the practice of the most debasing vices—setting at defiance both the laws of their country and the commands of their Maker.

Having borne for some time the injustice of these young men, the elders of Israel at length repaired with their complaints to Samuel at Ramah; and after representing to him the grievances to which the people were exposed through his infirmities, and the maladministration of his sons, they demanded to have the form of their government changed, and to be ruled, like other nations, by a king. This demand gave the aged prophet, for some time, great uneasiness; but having spread the subject before the

THE WEST.

1491 — Danaus.

1475

1450 — Deucalion. Hellen (Greece).

1425 — Dorus. Minos (Crete).

1400 — Pelops (1400).

1375 — The Atyadæ in Lydia.

1350

1325 — Perseus. The Pelasgi in Italy.

1300

1275 — Hercules (b. 1262) Orpheus.

1250 — The Argonauts (1250).

Siege of Thebes (1225).

1225 — The Heraclidæ in Lydia.

1200 — Trojan War (1184).

1175

1150 — Æolic Migration.

1125 — Doric Migration. Temenus.

1095

THE HEBREW JUDGES.

THE EXODUS, 1491 B.C.

1491 B.C.

LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

1451 B.C.

THE CONQUEST.

(1426)

CAPTIVITY TO MESOPOTAMIANS (1413).

CAPTIVITY TO MOABITES (1325).

CAPTIVITY TO CANAANITES (1305).

CAPTIVITY TO MIDIANITES (1252).

CAPTIVITY TO AMMONITES (1206).

CAPTIVITY TO PHILISTINES (1156).

Beginning of the Monarchy, 1095 B.C.

The length of this period is obtained from a passage in 1 Kings vi. 1, where it is stated that from the Exodus (1491 B.C.) to the foundation of the Temple (1011 B.C.) was 480 years. This is longer than the Theocratic Period by 84 years. Therefore, 480 — 84 = 396 = length of the period.

According to Greek legends, Danaus, the Egyptian, went to Greece about the time that Moses went to Canaan, so that the descendants of Danaus, Perseus, and Hercules were ruling at Argos during the Hebrew Heroic Period of the Judges.

THE DANAIDÆ. THE PERSIDÆ. THE HERACLIDÆ.

Aaron. Eleazar. Phinehas.—*Line*—Abishua. Bukki.—*Oz*—Uzzi. Zerahiah.—*High-Priests.*—Meraioth. Amariah. Ahitub.

THE EAST.

1491 — Moses.

1475

1450 — Death of Moses (1451).

1425 — Death of Joshua (1426). Cushan.

1400 — Othniel.

1375

1350 — Eglon.

1325 — Ehud. Shamgar.

1300 — Jabin. Deborah.

1275

1250 — Gideon. Tola.

1225 — Jair.

1200 — Jephtha.

Ibzan. Elon.

1175 — Abdon. Eli.

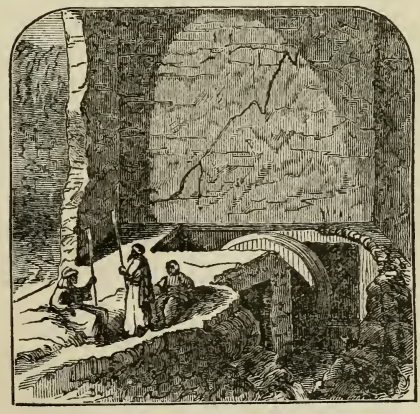
1150

1125 — Death of Samson. Ebenezer (battle) (1116). Saul.

1095

Almighty, he at length received directions from God, first to set before the people the consequences which must necessarily flow from the existence of kingly power among them; such as slavery to themselves and to their children, subjection to the most offensive offices, oppressive taxes, constant war, and many other evils which could not be enumerated; and then should they still persist in their determination to have a king, to grant them their request.

Samuel, in accordance with these directions, assembled the people together, and plainly and faithfully pointed out to them the dangers and difficulties to which the proposed change in the form of their government would necessarily expose them; but it was all to no purpose: the people still absolutely insisted on a compliance with their demand; saying, "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."



ENTRANCE TO A JEWISH SEPULCHRE.
(From Lyman Abbott's Commentary.)



CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE KINGS.

SECTION I.

SAUL: His Election as King—His Victory over the Ammonites—His Confirmation in the Kingdom—Samuel relinquishes the office of Judge, and appears thenceforth as a Prophet only—An extraordinary Exploit of Jonathan—Defeat of the Philistines—The Offense of Jonathan—Saul's Commission to extirpate the Amalekites—His Disobedience, and consequent Rejection from the Throne—David anointed as his Successor.

THE Israelites had hitherto lived as independent tribes and families, rather than as a distinct nation; and hence they acted in unison in such emergencies only as their common interests required. While they remained in that simple condition, they had no national character, but were under the immediate supervision and disposal of the Almighty himself; and their circumstances were prosperous or adverse, just in proportion to their obedience to the Divine commands, or their disregard of them. Henceforth, however, we shall have to view them as a consolidated nation, under one permanent head, or leader, and subject to all the vicissitudes attending ordinary nations; though the Almighty by no means relinquishes his exclusive right to their obedience, or his absolute authority over them as his peculiar people.

It having been revealed by the Almighty to the prophet Samuel that Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, should be the king of Israel, the prophet hastened privately to anoint him; soon after which he was publicly designated for that exalted station, in the presence of the whole nation. To give the utmost dignity and solemnity to the selection and inauguration of the future monarch,

Samuel convened a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh, brought thither the Ark of the Lord, and then proceeded to determine who should be the Lord's anointed, by lot. The people having separated themselves into tribes and families, first ascertained, by lot, from which tribe the king should be taken; when the lot fell upon the tribe of Benjamin. They next cast lots to determine to which family he should belong; when the family of Matri was designated. They then proceeded, in the same manner, to select the individual from that family whom the Lord had appointed for their ruler; and the lot fell upon Saul.

Saul having already learned from Samuel that God had determined that he should be king of Israel, intentionally absented himself from the assembly on this important occasion; but, as soon as the lot was determined in his favor, the people anxiously sought him out, and brought him to Samuel, who, presenting him to the assembled multitude, said, "Behold him whom the Lord hath chosen! There is none like him among the people." And when the people beheld the imposing aspect and noble stature of Saul, they immediately expressed their approbation of the choice by exclaiming, "*God save the king!*" Upon hearing this expression of the people's approbation of what had just passed, Samuel produced a record, which he had previously written, of all these events; and, after having rehearsed it in their presence, he placed the book in the Ark of the Covenant there to remain as a perpetual evidence of the truth of his prophecy.

Saul, in 1095 A. C., being thus, with the general approbation of the people, publicly recognized as king, immediately proceeded to Gibeah, his native place, while Samuel, after having dismissed the assembly, returned to Ramah. The leaders, and the chief men of the different tribes, soon

after repaired to Gibeah to congratulate Saul on his elevation to the throne, and to acknowledge their allegiance to him, by making him many valuable presents, in conformity with a custom then universally prevalent amongst Eastern nations. These presents were received by the king, and given by the people as tokens of peace and friendship, congratulation and joy, subjection and obedience; and, though there were a few individuals amongst the different tribes, who did not approve of the choice of Saul as king, yet the number was so comparatively limited, as to give the monarch little uneasiness.

Saul had scarcely become firmly seated on the throne before the Gileadites, who dwelt on the east side of the river Jordan, implored his assistance against Nahash, king of the Ammonites. This haughty monarch, at the head of a powerful army, had invaded Gilead, and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead, the capital of the country. The inhabitants of the city were at length reduced to so great extremity, that they consented, on condition that Nahash would raise the siege, to submit to any terms that he might propose; when, to their utter amazement, the cruel tyrant insisted, as a preliminary to any farther negotiation, that every man among the Gileadites should submit to the loss of his right eye. With this cruel condition the Gileadites at once resolved not to comply; and they, therefore, in order to gain time to invoke the aid of their friends, informed Nahash that they would reply to his demand at the expiration of seven days.

In the mean time the Gileadites dispatched messengers to king Saul, to inform him of their critical situation, and to implore immediate succor. With this application for assistance Saul resolved immediately to comply; and he, therefore, issued a proclamation, requiring the people to arm themselves, and repair to Gibeah with the least possi-

ble delay. When he came to review his army, he found the number of his troops to consist of three hundred and thirty thousand men, thirty thousand of whom belonged to the tribe of Judah; and with this force he resolved to march to the relief of the city on the following day. The messengers who had been sent to Saul hastened back with this joyful intelligence to their distressed brethren; and they, elated with the idea of being so soon delivered from their relentless enemies, sent them a message, saying, "To-morrow we will come out to you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you."

Saul having set forth early in the morning, with his army arranged in three divisions, advanced so rapidly that he reached the enemy's camp before the dawn of the following day; and, falling upon them suddenly and unexpectedly, immediately threw them into the utmost confusion, and so thoroughly routed them, that scarcely two of the whole Ammonite army were left together. This sudden and unexpected triumph over so formidable and cruel a foe, greatly enhanced the reputation of Saul; and some of his more intimate associates seized this favorable opportunity to advise him to punish all such as had hitherto refused to acknowledge him as king. But Saul, so far from following their advice, very prudently replied, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for, to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

The whole body of the people of Israel, with the sanction of Samuel, repaired, immediately after this important victory, to Gilgal, "and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." This transaction should, perhaps, be regarded as the solemn public renewal, and final establishment of the kingdom of Saul; and

Samuel embraced the opportunity thus afforded him, to warn the people and their chosen king, while thus assembled together, against tyranny and impiety. After having reminded them of the past faithfulness of God in raising up for them judges and deliverers in every emergency, he solemnly admonished them with regard to their future conduct, saying, "If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandments of the Lord; then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers."

From this period, Samuel relinquished the office and functions of a judge in Israel, and during the remainder of his life appears mainly as a prophet; and Saul, being now fully established on the throne, at once made preparation for a vigorous administration of the government, in all its departments. With this view he selected three thousand Israelites as a standing army; two thousand of whom he retained under his own immediate command at Michmash, and placed the other thousand under the command of his son Jonathan, at Gibeah. A short time after this, Jonathan, who was a youth of undaunted courage and great military prowess, attacked and captured a Philistine garrison at Geba, one of the frontier towns of the country; in consequence of which the Philistines immediately raised a powerful army, and, marching against the Israelites, encamped near Michmash, firmly resolved to be revenged for the taking of Geba upon the whole Israelitish nation.

Aware of the movement of the Philistines, Saul at once prepared to meet them; and he, accordingly, issued a proclamation to all Israel, to arm themselves and prepare

for the conflict—appointing Gilgal as the rendezvous of the army. The Philistines were, however, a great terror to the Israelites; and forgetting, on this occasion, their signal triumph over them at Mizpeh, a comparatively small number of them repaired to the standard of their king at Gilgal, whilst many secreted themselves in rocks and caves, and others retired for safety beyond the Jordan. To increase the distress and anxiety of Saul and the little band of faithful followers around him, the time of sacrifice was at hand, and Samuel had not yet arrived to present the offering before the Lord. In this emergency Saul, fearing that the enemy might fall upon his little army before the protection and assistance of the Almighty had been invoked, resolved to offer the sacrifice himself; but the burnt-offering was scarcely consumed, before the arrival of Samuel was announced; and when the prophet heard what Saul had done, he rebuked him with the utmost severity, for his distrust and impatience, immediately after which he left the camp.

Soon after Samuel's departure, Saul, accompanied by his son Jonathan, marched his forces to Gibeah, and there encamped. By desertion and other causes, his forces had become reduced to not many more than six hundred men, and these were all destitute of both sword and spear—their arms being no other than the different implements used in their respective occupations; such as plough-shares, hatchets, and pitchforks. The two armies having remained for some time encamped at a short distance from each other, being separated by nothing but a range of craggy rocks, Jonathan, the king's son, relying on divine assistance, resolved to make one desperate effort to overcome the enemy. He, therefore, taking advantage of the darkness of the night, left his own camp, and accompanied by his armor-bearer only, entered, unperceived, the camp of the

Philistines; and the two heroes, falling suddenly upon them, laid twenty of their number dead at their feet. So sudden and unexpected an attack filled the whole Philistine army with consternation, and threw them into the utmost confusion; and in this state of uncertainty, not being able to discriminate between friend and foe, they fell upon each other, and thus great numbers of them became the instruments of their own destruction.

This extraordinary exploit of Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and the consequences which followed, soon became known, not only to Saul's army, but throughout all the land of Israel; and many who, through fear of the enemy, had hitherto held back, now quitted their retreats, and immediately repaired to Saul's camp. Encouraged by this increase of his forces, Saul at once advanced against the Philistines, and attacked them with such resolution, that they were soon routed, and all either put to the sword, or compelled to save themselves by flight. Elated with this great and unexpected success, and resolved to follow up his victory, and extirpate, if possible, the whole Philistine nation, Saul now pressed forward in pursuit of them; and that no time might be lost, he, by proclamation, incautiously enjoined his whole army neither to eat nor drink till the approach of night had put an end to the slaughter; saying, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on my enemies."

The eagerness of Saul, however, to destroy the Philistines defeated itself; for, in the long and toilsome march, the people became faint and weary: and Jonathan, who had not heard the rash malediction of his father, "dipped his rod into the honey and ate," and thus strengthened, he alone was able to continue the pursuit. The Israelites having during the day slain many thousands of the Philistines, returned at night to the enemy's camp, and finding

amongst the spoil numerous sheep, they, in their famished state, immediately slew some of them, and eat them in their blood. This act being a violation of the Mosaic law, was complained of to the king by the priests; and Saul, in order to expiate the guilt of the people, caused a large stone to be placed in the centre of the camp, and said, "Bring me hither every man his ox and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord."

Imagining that the guilt of the people was now atoned for, Saul resolved immediately to pursue those Philistines who had escaped the slaughter of the previous day; but Ahiah, the high-priest, advised him first to consult the Almighty, and ascertain whether this course would be in accordance with the Divine will. "And Saul asked counsel of God, shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day." Conscious, from the silence of the Almighty, that unatoned sin somewhere existed among them, Saul at once determined to ascertain where and what it was; and he therefore issued orders, saying, "Draw ye near hither all ye chief of the people; and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die."

To ascertain where the sin lay which had brought down the Divine displeasure upon them, Saul caused the people to be assembled together; and, placing himself and Jonathan opposite to them, cast lots to determine to which party the guilt belonged, when the lot fell upon the king and his son. On another trial between Saul and Jonathan alone, Jonathan was taken; upon which the king, with

great apparent anxiety, asked him what he had done. "And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so, and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." The people, however, who well understood the relative character of the king and his son, at once resolved that this cruel sentence should not be put into execution; and they, therefore, "rescued Jonathan that he died not."

In the whole of this memorable transaction, Saul, for the first time, gave indications of that cruel, vindictive, and tyrannical disposition, which afterwards became the most prominent feature of his character. God, however, was still with him; and, though he did not permit him farther to pursue the Philistines, yet he signally favored him in many other enterprises. His kingdom was now firmly established, and he soon extended his conquests on every side. Beyond the river Jordan, and south and east of the Dead Sea, his victorious arms prevailed over Moab, Ammon, and Edom; and to the northward, he successfully contended with the kings of Zobah. Indeed, according to the sacred narrative, "whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed his foes."

The wonderful success which had thus far attended the arms of Saul on every side, left the Israelites, for a brief period, in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity; and while the whole nation were flushed with the recent triumphs of their king, Saul received orders from the Almighty, by the mouth of the prophet Samuel, to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both men and women." To carry this Divine command into execution, Saul immediately assembled an army at Telaim, consisting of two hundred and ten thousand men, ten thousand of whom

belonged to the tribe of Judah. With this immense force he entered the country of the Amalekites; but before he proceeded to execute his dread commission, he warned the Kenites—the descendants of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses—to depart from amongst the Amalekites, lest they should perish with them. He then fell upon the enemy who dwelt in the open country, all of whom he soon overcame and put to the sword; after which he invested the cities and towns, whose inhabitants soon shared a similar fate. "And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah, until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt."

But, notwithstanding this general destruction of the Amalekites, Saul only partially fulfilled the Divine command; for he, through avarice, spared the life of Agag, their king, and also carried off much booty, and many sheep and oxen; whereas, the Almighty, in consequence of the early, inveterate, and continuous opposition of the Amalekites to the Israelites, had commanded him so utterly to extirpate them, as not to allow a living thing to escape. This direct disregard of the Divine command, was so offensive to the Almighty, that he declared in a revelation to Samuel, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." Samuel soon after repaired to the camp, and as Saul beheld the aged prophet approaching, he advanced with joy to meet him; and, as though unconscious of his guilt, he exclaimed, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Samuel well knew, however, that this declaration was false; and he, accordingly, immediately inquired, "What meaneth, then, this bleating of the sheep in mine ears?" to which Saul replied, "The people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." When Samuel heard

this prevarication, he uttered that solemn and impressive truth, so often heard, and yet so seldom duly heeded: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams"—which was immediately followed by the startling declaration, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Appalled by this declaration from the Almighty, Saul now confessed his sin, and, in hopes of being forgiven, besought Samuel to remain with him while the sacrifice for which he had made preparations should be offered. With this earnest request, Samuel, with much apparent reluctance, at length complied; but immediately after the sacrifice was ended, he sent for Agag, the Amalekite king, and slew him with his own hands, saying, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women." The venerable prophet now, with deep grief, left Gilgal and returned to Ramah; "and Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul; and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

Saul, being thus publicly denounced by the prophet, and rejected by the Almighty, the preservation of the kingdom required the immediate designation of a successor; and, while Samuel was still secretly mourning over the great calamity which had overtaken Saul, the Lord appeared unto him and said, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil and go: I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons." In obedience to the Divine command, Samuel, without hesitation, made the necessary preparations, and

repaired to Bethlehem; and having offered a sacrifice, at which Jesse and his family were present, he next prepared to execute the great purpose of his mission. With this view he first sanctified Jesse and his sons, and then caused the latter to pass in succession before him, beginning with Eliab, the eldest. Assured, however, that neither of these was to be the future sovereign of Israel, Samuel anxiously inquired of Jesse whether he had any other children; and when Jesse informed him that he had one other son, a lad, who was then in the field watching the sheep, he desired him to send and fetch him. David was at this time about fifteen years of age, and, being unusually prepossessing in his appearance, the prophet no sooner beheld him than, by a secret impulse, he became satisfied that he was the person to be anointed. This impulse was immediately followed by the voice of the Lord, which said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

SECTION II.

SAUL: David's first Introduction to the King—Triumph over Goliath, and Defeat of the Philistines—Obtains Saul's Daughter in Marriage—The Friendship of David and Jonathan—Saul's Jealousy, and Determination to put David to Death—His Life preserved by Jonathan—Retires to a Cave near Adullam—His Visit to Abimelech the High-priest—Takes the City of Keilah—Death of Samuel.

As no immediate consequences followed the anointing of David by the prophet Samuel, and as he, for some years after, remained devotedly loyal to Saul, it is not probable that either his family or himself even, were, at that time, aware of the design of the sacred and important ceremony which

they had just witnessed. "The Spirit of the Lord," however, which then descended upon him, continued to dwell with him; and, by its divine operations upon both his understanding and his heart, gradually fitted him eminently to fill the exalted and responsible station to which the Almighty thus indicated his intention to call him. Without any external change, therefore, in his circumstances, he still continued to tend his father's flocks—devoting his leisure hours to the delightful studies of music and poetry, in both of which he eventually became preëminently excellent.

While David was thus occupied, and daily increasing in favor with the Almighty, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul," and left him in the most deplorable condition. Samuel, his former friend, no longer held any intercourse with him; and, thus left to himself, the recollection of the circumstances which had separated the aged prophet from him, at length so affected his mind as to produce a settled melancholy, only occasionally disturbed, and then by paroxysms of the wildest frenzy. To relieve his mind from this deplorable state, his courtiers had recourse to music; and as David's skill upon the harp had now become known throughout all the land, he was recommended as a suitable person to be introduced into the king's presence for this purpose. David was, accordingly, brought to court: "And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Thus commenced the intercourse between David and Saul; and with the beauty and skill of the youthful musician the king was so well pleased, that he appointed him one of his armor-bearers.

The Philistines had now recovered from the effects of their late defeat, and being still very numerous, they

resolved once more to array themselves against the Israelites. They, therefore, assembled all their forces, and encamped on a range of high land, on one side of the valley of Elah; and on the opposite side of the same valley Saul immediately drew up his forces to oppose them. While the two armies were thus situated, and in full view of each other, the Philistine champion, Goliath—a native of Gath, of gigantic stature—advanced towards the Israelitish camp, and in the most haughty and imperious terms challenged to single combat any hero of Israel; saying: "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants of Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."

This haughty challenge of Goliath was reiterated on forty successive days, and still no champion of Israel appeared to accept it. Saul was, therefore, at length reduced to so great extremity that he even offered his eldest daughter in marriage to the one who should successfully encounter the gigantic Philistine. Just at this period, David, who was not yet old enough to serve in the army as a regular soldier, arrived at the camp with a message from his father to three of his brothers, who were in the king's service; and observing the general dread which the presence of the mighty Philistine inspired, indignantly exclaimed, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" He resolved, therefore, notwithstanding the opposition of his elder brother, Eliab, to accept Goliath's challenge himself.

The resolution of David soon became known throughout

the camp, and it being communicated to the king, Saul ordered him into his presence; and when he beheld his youthful appearance, he said to him, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him, for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David, conscious that the source of his strength was in the Almighty, replied, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine;" and then, clearly to exhibit to the king the ground of his confidence, he related the following incident, which occurred while he was tending his father's flocks: "There came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb of the flock, and I went out after them, and slew them. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me from their power, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." By the relation of this circumstance, and by the unusual intrepidity which David evinced, Saul was satisfied that his resolution to meet Goliath arose, not from presumptuous daring, but from Divine inspiration; and he therefore said to him, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

In order, however, that David might not enter upon this momentous contest without being suitably armed, Saul arrayed him in his own armor; but David being unused to such weapons, laid them aside, and took his shepherd's staff, a sling, and five smooth stones, and with no other preparation for the conflict, advanced to meet his powerful antagonist. When Goliath beheld the youthful hero, he, in the most contemptuous manner, exclaimed, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" and then cursing David by the Philistine's gods, he added, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and

to the beasts of the field." To this haughty bravado, David, in the calm courage which reliance on the Almighty always inspires, replied: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistine this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with the sword and the spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

The battle between the two heroes was much more brief than had been the preliminaries to it. As they approached each other, David placed one of the small stones, which he had taken from the brook, into his sling, and threw it at Goliath with such precision and force, that it struck him upon the forehead, penetrating his skull, and prostrating him to the earth. David's triumph being by this one blow complete, he approached his antagonist, and with the Philistine's own sword cutting off his head, he carried it to the camp of Israel. The fall of Goliath was no sooner beheld by his countrymen, than consternation spread throughout their whole army; and the Philistines flying for safety into their own country, were pursued by the Israelites, as far as Gath and Ekron, and great numbers of them were put to the sword. David was now brought into the presence of Saul, bearing with him the Philistine champion's head; and the king having first expressed his admiration of the young hero's valor and triumph, next asked him whose son he was: when David replied, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlemite."

The death of Goliath by the hand of David, naturally spread the fame of the latter throughout all Israel, and the action was everywhere loudly applauded; but no one expressed his admiration of the event with more hearty sincerity than Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul. He was himself a prince of distinguished bravery, and was, therefore, well qualified properly to estimate David's intrepid conduct in this conflict; and he, therefore, paid him the compliment to present him his own bow and sword, and became thenceforth, till death, his most devoted friend. But while David was thus eliciting the friendship and affection of even royalty itself, an incident occurred, which immediately changed the whole current of Saul's feelings towards him, and made the king, from that time forth, his bitterest enemy. Among those who had been appointed to celebrate the recent victory, was a chorus of women, the burthen of whose song was, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

The irritation which David's popularity, thus publicly expressed, produced upon the mind of Saul, hastened on one of the king's periodic fits of melancholy; and to soothe his agitated and desponding mind, the sweet strains of David's harp were again called into requisition. While the youthful bard, and now hero also, unconscious of danger, was thus exerting his musical skill in the presence of his royal master, the frantic king, with deadly purpose, hurled his javelin at him with such force, that his preservation from death can only be attributed to the immediate interposition of Divine Providence. Saul, however, though foiled in this open attempt upon the life of David, resolved to compass his malignant purpose in some other way; and he, therefore, removed him from the office of armor bearer, and placed him in command of a troop of a thousand men, that he might employ him in the most

hazardous enterprises, and thus expose him to certain death. God, however, was with him, and he, therefore, everywhere proved successful.

David had now attained the full development of manhood, and was as much distinguished for the beauty and grace of his person as he was for his bravery and skill as a warrior. Being much at court, he naturally attracted the attention of the king's household; and Saul's second daughter, Michal, soon became violently in love with him. The state of his daughter's affections being made known to Saul, he, so far from opposing her, embraced every opportunity to foster and inflame her passion for the young hero, expecting that, by bringing David into closer alliance with himself, the opportunities for sacrificing his life would be increased. Knowing David's intrepidity and daring courage, the king, therefore, proposed to bestow Michal's hand upon whomsoever would kill an hundred Philistines, and bring him the evidence of their death. David having, in the mean time, reciprocated the affection of Michal, readily acceded to Saul's proposal, and, arming a suitable number of his companions, they immediately set out in search of the enemy, whom, having soon found, they so suddenly attacked them, that the Philistines, not being prepared to defend themselves, fled before the intrepid little band, leaving over two hundred of their number in David's hands. The prisoners thus taken were immediately put to the sword, and the evidence of their death which Saul required being readily obtained, the royal pledge was at once redeemed, and David became the king's son-in-law.

The success of David, however, seemed only to increase Saul's inveterate hatred against him; and he now, therefore, no longer concealed his determination to take his life. But, fortunately, David had secured the most devoted and self-sacrificing friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son; and

through his watchfulness, the malicious designs of the king were frequently thwarted. The conduct of Saul towards David from this period forward, can only be accounted for, by assuming that he now clearly saw in him his own successor on the throne; and that the mental frenzy which this perception produced, led him madly to resolve to frustrate the purpose of even the Almighty. He, therefore, openly directed his son Jonathan to take some favorite servants with him, seek out David, and put him to death. From so dreadful an act, Jonathan, however, drew back with horror; and having first warned David of his danger, he next entered into the presence of the king, and by earnestly setting forth the great services of David, and the blamelessness of his life, he so far awakened his sense of justice, that "Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan, and sware, as the Lord liveth, he (David) shall not be slain."

Having obtained this solemn oath from his father, Jonathan regarded it as a guarantee of David's safety and protection; and he, therefore, immediately hastened to his friend with the glad tidings, and brought him back to court. Saul, however, had no intention of sparing David's life; but, as the Philistines had again invaded the country, he needed his immediate services; and he, therefore, dissembled his real feelings, and apparently restored him to his favor. Commissioned by the king to repel the enemy, David marched forth at the head of his troops, and, having been eminently successful in every action, he returned, flushed with his victory, to court; honored throughout his march homeward, by the acclamations of the people, and expecting the welcome plaudits of the king. His triumph, however, over the Philistines only served to rouse Saul's hatred afresh, and to bring on another fit of his melancholy frenzy; and while David was once more endeavoring with his harp

to beguile and soothe the king's agitated mind, he thrust his javelin at him with such violence, that, missing its aim, it penetrated far into the adjacent wall.

David, from this period, quit the court and service of Saul, never again to return to either. He first repaired to his own house; but, being pursued thither by the servants of the king, he retired for safety to Naioth, where Samuel presided over a college of youthful prophets, and there remained for some time in comparative safety. Saul, however, having at length learned where David was, sent a body of men to Naioth with directions to seize him, and bring him immediately to the palace; but David, being advised of their approach, secretly left Naioth, and repaired to the dwelling of Jonathan, where the solemn league of friendship, into which they had formerly entered, was renewed. At the close of their interview, David again reminded Jonathan of his constant exposure to death from the hand of the king; but Jonathan, in order to allay his fears, assured him that his father was accustomed to take no important step without first consulting him; and as he had not even intimated a design on his life, his fears must necessarily be groundless. To this remark David replied, "Thy father knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved; but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." Greatly affected by this argument, and now satisfied that David's fears were not groundless, Jonathan, in order to afford him all the relief in his power, said to him in reply, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee."

The day following this important interview between David and Jonathan, was the time of the beginning of the feast of the new moon; and as David, as a member of the royal family, was accustomed, on such occasions, to sit at

meat at the king's table, he chose this opportunity to ascertain what Saul's real intentions with regard to him were. With this view, he determined to absent himself from the feast; and he, accordingly, arranged with Jonathan that, should the king observe his absence, he should inform him that, by his permission, he had gone to Bethlehem to keep the feast with his own kinsmen. On the first day of the feast, Saul observed that David's seat was vacant; but as he supposed that some ceremonial uncleanness had prevented him from being present, he did not seem to notice it. When, however, he beheld the same seat vacant on the second day of the feast, he furiously demanded of Jonathan, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?" and when Jonathan replied, that David had, with his permission, gone to Bethlehem to sacrifice there with his own family, Saul's anger knew no bounds: and after upbraiding Jonathan in the harshest and most severe terms, for his friendship for David, he, in a perfect frenzy, hurled his javelin at David's empty seat. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame."

Having thus ascertained, beyond a doubt, that Saul had resolved upon the death of David, Jonathan, on the morning of the third day of the feast, repaired to the retreat of his friend, and informed him of all that he had witnessed. They then solemnly renewed their protestations of friendship to each other; immediately after which, David, collecting together a few of his most devoted followers, commenced those tedious and distressing wanderings, which continued during the remainder of Saul's life, and during the greater part of which David was in imminent peril of his life. The shield of the Almighty was, however, over him; and as great were the purposes of God with regard

to him, his protection was sure. He first went to the city of Nob, at that time the abode of the Tabernacle; and having obtained from Abimelech, the high-priest, the sword of Goliath, and the necessary provisions for prosecuting his journey, he advanced into the country of the Philistines as far as the city of Gath, of which Achish was then king. Here, however, he was soon recognized, and reported to the king as the conqueror of Goliath, and the great enemy of the Philistine race; but by feigning madness, he effected his escape, and retired to a cave near Adullam—a city of considerable importance, belonging to the mountainous regions of Judah. While in this retreat, David's followers increased so considerably, that he soon found himself at the head of four hundred well-armed men; and with this force he, at the instigation of the prophet Gad, who had now joined him, descended to the plains below, and occupied a position in the forest of Hareth. Having thus secured his own comparative safety, David's thoughts were now turned to the situation of his aged and helpless parents; and lest the inveterate hatred of Saul should extend even to them, he solicited and obtained for them the protection of the king of Moab.

Saul being at length informed of the situation of David, and of the number of his followers, became greatly alarmed, and he, accordingly, repaired to Gibeah, and there assembled the leaders of the tribe of Benjamin, and appealed to them in the most pitiful terms, saying, "Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds: that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath

stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait, as at this day." Saul had no sooner finished this address, than Doeg, his herdsman, informed him of David's visit to Abimelech, the high-priest, of his reception, and of the aid he had received; in consequence of which, Saul immediately sent for Abimelech, and all the other priests that officiated in the Tabernacle at Nob, and caused them to be indiscriminately put to death. Nor did this cruel act satiate his bloody resentment; for, lest his anger should be suffered to cool, he at once sent off a body of his troops to the city of Nob, with strict orders to put every man, woman, and child to death, and to destroy all their cattle, and every other living creature they should find in the place. Saul, by this indiscriminate act of severity, evidently designed to extirpate the entire family of Abimelech; but the Almighty frustrated his wicked purpose, by preserving the life of Abiathar, one of the high-priest's sons, and enabling him to flee to David, that he might inform him of all that had passed. This intelligence of Saul's cruelty greatly afflicted David, for he could not but regard himself as, in some degree, the innocent cause of it; and he, therefore, after deeply lamenting that so melancholy a catastrophe should have occurred, invited Abiathar to place himself under his protection, saying, "Abide thou with me; fear not: for he that seeketh thy life, seeketh my life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

While David and his companions in arms dwelt in the forest of Hareth, one of the noblest acts of his eventful life occurred. The restless Philistines once more invaded the land of Israel, and entering the country of Judah, took the city of Keilah. Intelligence of this event being communicated to David, he at once, forgetting all the injuries he had received at the hand of Saul, resolved to march

to the relief of the city. But before he entered upon so important and hazardous an enterprise, he repaired to the Divine Oracle, and inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went and fought with the Philistines, and brought away the spoil, and smote them with a great slaughter."

David having thus delivered the city of Keilah out of the hands of the Philistines, seems to have been inclined to take up his abode in that place; and with this view he consulted the Almighty, in order to ascertain whether the inhabitants of Keilah would support him, should the city be invested by the army of Saul. The reply to his enquiry was, that the people of Keilah would prove perfidious to him; and he, therefore, retired with his followers to some strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph—a mountainous region within the precincts of the tribe of Judah, and on the confines of Edom.

The news of David's triumph over the Philistines at Keilah, soon reached the ears of Saul, who, fearing lest he should fortify himself in that place, immediately marched his army thither in pursuit of him; but on arriving at Keilah, and being informed whither his intended prey had fled, he followed David into the wilderness, and there "sought him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand." While hunted thus by Saul, David received a visit from Jonathan, who had been secretly informed of the place of his concealment; and at the close of their brief interview, Jonathan endeavored to encourage the heart of his friend, by exhorting him, notwithstanding his many trials, not to be disheartened, saying, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find thee: and

thou shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to thee. And they renewed their covenant before the Lord."

The Ziphites were in the interest of Saul; and they, therefore, no sooner learned that David abode among them, than they communicated intelligence of the fact to the king, and offered, should he afford them sufficient aid, to deliver him into his hands. This information from the Ziphites afforded Saul the greatest satisfaction, and he accordingly entered at once into their schemes; but David, being apprised of the conspiracy formed against him, left the country of the Ziphites, and retired southward to the wilderness of Maon. Thither Saul immediately followed, and soon pressed so closely upon him that nothing but a small mountain-range separated the two armies; but just as Saul was about to grasp his supposed victim, news was brought to him that a Philistine army had invaded his country, and that his immediate presence was requisite to repel them. Thus, by the direct interposition of the Almighty, was David delivered from one of the most imminent dangers of his life; but though Saul had withdrawn his army, he did not consider it safe longer to remain where he then was, and he therefore took shelter among the strong-holds of Engedi—a desert place, on the western confines of the Dead Sea.

Saul having defeated the Philistines and returned to Gibeah, immediately sought intelligence of David and his followers; and having learned that they were in the wilderness of Engedi, he selected three thousand of his choicest troops, and went to seek David and his men "upon the rocks of the wild goats." On the approach of Saul's army David and his men concealed themselves in a large dark cave, the mouth of which Saul himself soon after entered; and while there, and not suspecting the approach even of danger, David came quietly behind him, and cut off the

skirt of his robe. Saul soon after left the cave, and David, following him at a short distance, called after him and said, "My lord the king; wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt. Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee, to-day, into mine hand in the cave; and some bade me kill thee, but mine eye spared thee, and I said I will not put forth mine hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee." This magnanimous conduct on the part of David so sensibly touched the chords of Saul's better nature, that he became deeply affected, "And Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. And now behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul." At the close of this important interview, Saul returned with his army to Gibeah; but David and his followers remained in Engedi.

In 1059, A. C., during the brief interval which followed the remarkable incident just related, the nation was called upon to mourn over the death of the prophet Samuel.

The event, however, should not have been unexpected, as the venerable prophet had attained the ninety-eighth year of his age, during twelve of which he had governed Israel alone, and had afterwards, for eighteen years, in conjunction with Saul, officiated as judge. In the brief record of the sacred text, the melancholy event is thus touchingly chronicled:—"And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented for him, and buried him in his house at Ramah"—a simple notice of the end of so great a man, but one which shows how strong a hold Samuel had upon the heart of the whole nation.

SECTION III.

SAUL—David's Adventure with Nabal—Spares Saul's life a second time—His Settlement at Ziklag—His Wars with Ziklag—Saul's Interview with the Sorceress of Endor—Battle of Gilboa—Death of Saul and Jonathan—David's Grief on the occasion—David recognized at Hebron as King—Opposed by Abner, Saul's Chief General—Battle of Hebron—David declared King of all Israel.

WHILE all Israel was deploring the death of Samuel, David left Engedi and retired again to the vicinity of Maon, in the wilderness of Paran, where he had once before found, for a brief period, a temporary retreat. Not far from Maon dwelt Nabal, a man of great wealth, but of a churlish and morose temper. David, by extending his protection to the flocks of Nabal, during his previous residence in this wilderness, had brought him under great obligation to him; and he, therefore, thought it no more than reasonable that now, when he himself needed assistance, the obligation should be returned. Under these circumstances he sent a deputation of his young men to Nabal, requesting provisions for the supply of the immediate wants of his followers.

Compliance with this moderate request of David Nabal not only peremptorily refused, but he also treated the messengers of David in the most insulting manner. This ungrateful conduct so exasperated David that he resolved to destroy Nabal's whole family that very night; and this resolution, rash as it was, he would certainly have executed, had he not been fortunately prevented by Abigail, Nabal's wife. One of her servants having witnessed the indignity heaped upon David's messengers by Nabal, immediately communicated intelligence of it to his mistress; and Abigail knowing David's power, and fearing the just retaliation of his anger, resolved to avert, if possible, the impending danger. With this view she ordered her servants hastily to put up a large quantity of provisions, and causing them to be placed upon asses, she herself hastened to convey them to David's camp. She had, however, scarcely commenced her journey, before she beheld David, at the head of four hundred of his men, descending a distant hill, and approaching the residence of Nabal, with the fixed purpose of immediately executing his fearful design. As soon as the companies met Abigail prostrated herself upon the ground before David, and addressed him in language so affecting and appropriate, that his resentment was at once overcome; and raising her from the earth he exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from revenging myself with mine own hand."

Abigail having thus happily pacified David, left her present with him, and returned to her own house. On her arrival at home she found Nabal engaged in rioting and drinking with a number of his dissolute companions; and she, therefore, deferred the relation of what had just

passed until the following morning, that in his sober moments he might be the better prepared fully to understand the imminence of the calamity from which he had been preserved. By the relation, however, when it at length came. Nabal was so greatly terrified that his heart sank within him; and his gloomy and fearful apprehensions of future danger so completely overwhelmed him, that at the end of ten days he expired. A short time after the death of Nabal, Abigail became the wife of David; and he also married, about the same time, Ahinoam, a Jezreelitess. His first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, had been given by her father to a young man named Phalti, in order to remove David from all pretensions to the throne.

The respite from the persecutions of Saul, which David enjoyed after the scene in the cave, was, notwithstanding Saul's solemn protestations, brief and transient; for the Ziphites had no sooner informed him of David's return to their wilderness, than he placed himself at the head of three thousand of his choicest troops, and marched in pursuit of him. Having reached the wilderness, Saul encamped his forces on Mount Hachilah; and on the evening of the same day, David, accompanied by his cousin, Abishai, went to reconnoitre the king's position. Approaching the royal camp, he found the whole army wrapped in so profound a sleep, that he entered unobserved the king's tent, and took from it Saul's spear, and cruse of water. Retiring with these evidences of the success of his adventure, to an eminence, within hearing distance of the king's camp, he first aroused the sleeping multitude, and then exhibiting the spear and the cruse, reproached Abner, Saul's chief general, in the bitterest and most sarcastic terms, for not more faithfully guarding the person of his royal master. Saul no sooner witnessed this thrilling scene, than he was completely overcome by David's gracious forbear

ance; and he, therefore, conscious of his own guilty purpose, in pursuing David's life, exclaimed, "I have sinned; return, my son David; for I will do thee no harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly. Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail."

But notwithstanding this second apparent relenting of Saul, and fresh assurance that he should thenceforth be unharmed by him, still David felt convinced that there could be no safety for him while he remained within the bounds of Israel; and he therefore formed the desperate resolution of placing himself under the protection of the Philistines. Accordingly, he soon after repaired, with his six hundred followers, to Achish, king of Gath; and as the Philistine monarch was fully aware of the rupture between David and Saul, the young hero was now received by him with the greatest courtesy and kindness. David had dwelt but a short time in Gath, before he became a distinguished favorite of the king; and availing himself of this favorable circumstance, he requested that he and his followers might take possession of Ziklag—a city situated in the southern extremity of the land of Judah, but which that tribe had never held as a permanent residence. This request being readily granted, David immediately removed thither; and he had scarcely become settled in Ziklag before he was joined by so many of Saul's most distinguished officers and soldiers, as to render his force truly formidable.

Soon after David's settlement in Ziklag, he was enabled, from the great increase of his followers, to assume the aspect of an independent prince, and to attack, on his own account, the Amalekites, the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and other tribes who still lingered in the southern part of the

possessions of Judah. From these common enemies, all of whom he put to the sword, David obtained immense spoils—a large proportion of which he bestowed upon the king of Gath, as an acknowledgment of his obligation to him for his favor and protection. Achish, supposing that these spoils had been taken from the Israelites, was led by this circumstance to regard David as one of his most faithful adherents; and as he was preparing to turn his entire force against the Israelites, he sent messengers to David, to acquaint him with his design, and to desire him to lead his followers at once to Shunem, the general rendezvous of the Philistine army. The position in which this request placed David was peculiarly trying; for, while, on the one hand, gratitude to Achish urged him to a compliance with the king's request, on the other, should he comply, he would be found fighting against his own countrymen. He at length resolved, however, to march his army to Shunem, and leave the event to the disposal of a wise Providence.

Saul having received intelligence that the Philistines had advanced as far as Shunem, and were there encamped, immediately marched against them, and encamped his army near the mountains of Gilboa, directly opposite the camp of the enemy. The Philistine army being much more numerous than the army of Israel, Saul began to fear that he would not be successful against them; and his fears were greatly increased, when, on asking direction of the Almighty, he received no answer. In absolute despair, he now had recourse to necromancy; and secretly repairing to Endor, about nine miles from Gilboa, where resided a sorceress, he besought her to bring forth from his grave the prophet Samuel. Extraordinary as this may seem, God permitted the form of Samuel to appear to Saul, but only to remind him of his approaching destruction; for,

to the king's inquiries, Samuel replied, "Wherefore dost thou ask instruction of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and become thine enemy; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; the Lord shall also deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

With these sad tidings Saul returned to his camp; and on the following morning the two armies changed their position—the Philistines removing to Aphek, and the Israelites to Jezreel. While the armies were thus positioned, some of the Philistine princes, observing David and his followers with the king of Gath, inquired of Achish why they were there; and when they were informed of the circumstances under which they had asked his protection, they desired that they might be dismissed from his service; fearing that, in the approaching action, they would desert their new ally, and join their own countrymen. With this request of the associate princes, Achish, though assured, from David's past conduct, that he would be faithful to him, was obliged to comply; and in dismissing David and his followers from the army, he thus expressed his confidence in David's fidelity: "Surely as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; nevertheless, the lords favor thee not. Wherefore, now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines."

Thus unexpectedly relieved from his embarrassing situation, David, with his followers, immediately left the Philistine camp, to return to Ziklag; and, while on his march thither, he was joined by a large number of the tribe of Manasseh. On arriving at Ziklag he found that, during his absence, a straggling band of Amalekites had pillaged and burnt the place, and made captive the whole

of the inhabitants, including his two wives. Though this disaster deeply grieved David, yet he did not idly pine over his loss; but determined to remedy, as far as possible, the evil. With this view, he desired Abiathar the priest, to consult the Lord to ascertain whether, if he should pursue the Amalekites, he would be successful; and being assured that he "would surely overtake them, and without fail recover all," he left two hundred of his men to guard the baggage, and, with the rest, immediately marched after the enemy. Coming upon them unexpectedly, while they were rioting over their spoils, David attacked them with such energy that those only escaped who were mounted upon their camels; and, having thus regained not only all that had been taken from himself and his followers, but also the immense plunder which those robbers had obtained from other places, he returned in triumph to Ziklag. The flocks and herds which David thus suddenly acquired, he bestowed, as an expression of gratitude, upon those friends who had generously succored him, during his various wanderings in the wilderness.

While David was thus engaged with the Amalekites, the decisive battle which had been anticipated between the Philistines and the Israelites, occurred. The conflict commenced near Jezreel; but the Israelites, being soon overpowered by the superior numbers of the Philistines, were compelled to give way, and retreat to Gilboa. Thither the Philistines pursued them; and, though Saul and his sons performed prodigies of valor, yet all proved unavailing: the day of Saul's destruction had arrived, and he, therefore, after witnessing the death of his three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Melchishua, fell upon his own sword, and thus ingloriously terminated his chequered career. "So Saul died, for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he

kept not; and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit. And the Lord turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

On the morning of the third day after the fatal battle of Gilboa, intelligence of the sad event was brought to David by a young Amalekite, who had been a spectator of the whole scene, and an eye-witness of the death of Saul and his sons. To satisfy David of the correctness of his information, the Amalekite produced the bracelet and crown of Saul, which he said he had taken off of the king, after his death. "Then David and his men mourned, and wept, and fasted, until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel." David gave also a more enduring expression of his grief for the death of Saul and Jonathan, by the composition of one of the most beautiful elegiacs on record—the whole of which is still preserved in the first chapter of the second book of Samuel.

David's grief for the death of Saul was a sincere expression of his loyalty, and because he was "The Lord's Anointed;" but he mourned the loss of Jonathan as that of his most endeared personal friend—one in whom he had ever reposed the most unlimited confidence, and who, with the sympathies of a brother, had, from his youth, shared in all his joys and sorrows. The character of Jonathan has, indeed, scarcely a parallel in either sacred or profane history. It combined the attributes of fortitude, fidelity, and magnanimity, with a soul susceptible of the most refined friendship, and superior to all the temptations of ambition and vanity; and all these rare qualities were crowned with perfect resignation to the will of the Almighty.

Early on the morning following the battle of Gilboa, the Philistines returned to the field of carnage; and finding amongst the slain the bodies of Saul and his sons, they

first stripped them of their armor—which they placed in the temple of their idol Ashtaroth—and then, having cut off their heads, nailed their bodies to the walls of Bethshan—a city belonging to the tribe of Manasseh. As soon, however, as the people of Jabesh-Gilead, who still retained a grateful sense of obligation to their late sovereign for having delivered them out of the hands of their relentless foe, Nahash, heard of the indignity with which the remains of Saul and those of his sons had been treated by the Philistines, they selected from their number a choice band of daring spirits, and sent them to Bethshan, to rescue, if possible, those bodies from their disgraceful exposure. The enterprise entirely succeeded—the bodies were recovered; and, being brought to Jabesh, the flesh was first consumed by fire, and then the ashes and bones were carefully buried near the city.

The death of Saul, in 1055 A. C., leaving the succession to the throne of Israel open to David, the Almighty directed him to go up to Hebron, the chief city of the tribe of Judah, there to be recognized as their future monarch. On his arrival at Hebron, the princes of Judah repaired thither in a body, and, after congratulating him on his return to his native country, they called a public assembly of the people, and immediately anointed him king. David's grief for the death of Saul and Jonathan was not, however, entirely allayed by this sudden change in his own fortunes; and, having been informed of the noble conduct of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines and giving them an honorable burial, he sent an embassy to them to thank them for what they had done, and to assure them that they might thenceforward depend upon his favor and protection. He also instructed his embassadors to inform the people of Gilead that the tribe of Judah had elevated him to the vacant throne.

Elevated thus to the throne by the tribe of Judah, David commenced his administration by appointing Joab commander of his forces; but he soon found a powerful opponent, in the person of Abner, the general-in-chief of the late king's hosts. That he might the more effectually oppose David, he caused Ishbosheth, the only surviving son of Saul, to be proclaimed king over all the tribes of Israel except the tribe of Judah; and, in order to secure the support of the gallant Gileadites, he selected Mahanaim, a city belonging to the tribe of Gad, and situated on the east side of the river Jordan, as the place of his abode. The standard of opposition to David being thus reared, Abner declared war against him; and that no time might be lost, he immediately led a select body of his troops into the land of Judah, to open an attack upon Hebron. In the mean time David, being informed that Abner was marching upon Hebron, sent his general, Joab, accompanied by his two brothers, Abishai and Asahel, to oppose him. The two armies met near Gibeon; and, as soon as they were drawn up in battle array, Abner challenged Joab to decide the contest by twelve champions selected from each army. This challenge being accepted, the men were drawn out; and such was the skill and desperation with which they fought, that each man killed his antagonist—and, consequently, neither party triumphed. A general action, therefore, immediately followed, and, for some time, it was uncertain which party would prevail; but, at length, the forces of Abner gave way and endeavored to save themselves by flight.

Flushed with their victory, Joab and his brothers eagerly pursued the fugitives; and Asahel being remarkably fleet of foot, ran far in advance of the rest of the army; and overtaking Abner, a single contest took place between them. Into this contest Abner was very reluctantly drawn;

and he, therefore, earnestly remonstrated with Asahel, and besought him to desist, lest the result should be the forfeiture of his life. To this earnest remonstrance Asahel paid no regard; and being anxious to take the general prisoner, he rushed upon him so incautiously that Abner, to save himself, thrust him through with his spear, and laid him dead at his feet. The victorious army soon after arrived at the spot where the body of Asahel lay; and at the appalling sight they were so greatly shocked, that they immediately ceased the pursuit. Of this pause in the action Abner availed himself to rally his scattered forces; and conducting his men to an adjacent elevation, beyond the reach of the army of Joab, but still within hearing distance, he addressed him, saying, "Shall the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be, then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?"

This remonstrance of Abner had the desired effect, and Joab, accordingly, sounded a retreat, and the two armies separated — Abner returning to Mahanaim, while Joab remained for the night where he then was. On the following morning he returned to the scene of battle, and, from an examination of the slain, he found that Abner had lost in the action three hundred and sixty of his men, while his own loss was but nineteen. Joab's grief, however, for the loss of Asahel, was deep and pungent; and after the usual expressions of mourning, he and his brother Abishai conveyed the body of Asahel to Bethlehem, and there entombed it in the sepulchre of his ancestors. This sacred rite performed, they set out with their army for Hebron, and by a forced march during the night, they reached that place early the following morning.

About two years elapsed from the death of Saul to the battle of Gibeon; and during the five and a half years

which followed the latter event, a civil war was constantly kept up between the contending parties, the result of almost every incident of which favored the cause of David. The continuance of this contest for so many years is mainly attributable to the prudence and address of Abner; but at length a quarrel of so serious a nature occurred between that general and Ishbosheth, as to induce Abner to determine to transfer his interest and influence to the cause of David. Having settled in his own mind this determination, he addressed himself to Ishbosheth, saying, "As the Lord hath sworn unto David, even so do I unto him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba."

In accordance with this fixed purpose, Abner sent messengers to Hebron, through whom he proposed to David to bring, on certain conditions, those tribes over to his interest which had hitherto adhered to the house of Saul. These messengers David received with the utmost courtesy; but he declined to enter into any negotiations with Abner, unless he would first cause his wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, to be restored to him. The desire of David for the restoration of Michal, was no sooner communicated to Abner by his messengers, than he constrained Phaltiel, upon whom he had bestowed her, to deliver her up to her lawful husband. This being done, Michal was immediately sent to Hebron; and the only obstacle in the way of the execution of Abner's purpose being thus removed, he assembled together the elders and principal men of Israel, at Mahanaim, and said to them, "Ye sought for David in times past, to be king over you, Now then do it, for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." The

elders of Israel, and the officers of the army, having long desired to transfer their allegiance from Ishbosheth to David, readily acceded to Abner's proposal; and their example was immediately followed by the whole tribe of Benjamin.

Having thus consummated his arrangements in favor of David, Abner selected twenty of the most eminent of the Benjamites, and with them repaired to Hebron, to ratify the treaty into which he and David had entered. David received him and his companions with the greatest kindness; and, after having entertained them in the most sumptuous manner for ten days, Abner left Hebron for the purpose of bringing the elders of the people and the officers of the army thither, that he might in their presence, and under their sanction, publicly deliver the government into David's hands.

Soon after Abner had left Hebron, Joab returned from a successful expedition against the Philistines; and being informed that that distinguished general had, during his absence, visited the king, and been received by him in the most flattering manner, his jealous fears became at once alarmed, lest Abner, after his reconciliation with David, should supplant him in his favor. Under the influence of the excitement which these fears produced, Joab immediately repaired to the king, and severely reproached him for listening to Abner's proposals, and allowing him to depart from Hebron in safety. He then, in the king's name, sent messengers in pursuit of Abner; and they, having overtaken him at the well of Sirah, requested him to return immediately to Hebron, as the king had some farther important communication to make to him. Abner, not suspecting any evil, unhesitatingly obeyed, as he supposed, the royal summons; but on his way back to Hebron he was waylaid by Joab and his brother Abishai, and inhumanly murdered.

When David was informed of the death of Abner, and of the circumstances attending that melancholy event, his grief was excessive; and having first publicly exonerated himself from all participation in the foul and wicked transaction, he next ordered that the funeral ceremonies should be observed in the most solemn and impressive manner; and to give to the scene all the imposingness possible, he himself walked at the head of the procession as the chief mourner. The day preceding the burial of Abner David passed in solemn prayer and fasting; and immediately after the ceremonies were closed, he publicly addressed the people, expatiating upon the various virtues of the deceased, and deploring the loss both to himself and to the nation, of so brave a soldier, and so wise and prudent a counsellor. The power and influence of Joab were, however, so great, that David did not feel warranted in punishing him as his crime deserved; and he, therefore, closed his address with the reflection, that "The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

Soon after the death of Abner Ishbosheth was publicly murdered by Baanah and Rechab, two of the principal officers of the army; and intelligence of this event being soon spread throughout the nation, all the tribes at once sent deputies to Hebron, to acknowledge David's right to the sovereignty, and to pledge to him their allegiance. Thus David, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and after having reigned seven and a half years over the tribe of Judah at Hebron, became, in 1048, A. C., by common consent, king of all Israel.

SECTION IV.

DAVID—Jerusalem taken, and made the Capital of the Kingdom—Defeat of the Philistines—Removal of the Tabernacle and the Ark to Jerusalem—David designs to build a Temple to Jehovah, but is forbidden—War with the Moabites—Triumphs over other Nations—Organization of the Army, and Settlement of the Government—His Kindness to Mephibosheth—Joab's Triumph over the Ammonites and the Syrians.

DAVID being now invested with full regal authority over all Israel, and having a brave and gallant army at his command, resolved to signalize the commencement of his reign by the reduction of Jerusalem, the strong-hold of the Jebusites. He, accordingly, without loss of time, marched his army against that place; and having arrived before the citadel, or fort of Zion, which commanded the city, he summoned the garrison to surrender. The Jebusites, however, supposing the place to be impregnable, haughtily derided his command; and in their reply to his summons, they intimated that such was the strength of the place, that the lame and the blind alone, within it, would be able to defend it against any assault of an enemy.

Irritated by this haughty defiance, David immediately determined that the citadel should, at all hazards, be reduced; and he, therefore, in order to excite the emulation of his soldiers, caused proclamation to be made throughout the camp that, "Whoever scaleth the wall, and smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain." Joab, who was then at the head of the army, being more alert and active than any of his associates, seized this new opportunity to signalize his valor; and he was, therefore, the first to mount the wall and attack the enemy. This daring action of their leader being immediately imitated by a large body of the troops, the garrison was soon overcome; and as the flight of its defenders was witnessed by the inhabitants of the city, they at once followed their example; and thus

the whole place now became an easy conquest to the army of Israel. "So David took the strong-hold of Zion, and called it The city of David."

Having thus taken Jerusalem, David resolved to make it, thenceforth, the royal residence; and he, therefore, extended the city to the citadel, and commissioned Joab to repair and beautify the old city of Jebus, for the better accommodation of the people. Jerusalem, however, contained no dwelling place suitable for the residence of the king; and David, therefore, resolved to build a royal palace on one of the high places of the city, to aid him in the erection of which, Hiram, king of Tyre, with whom he had entered into a treaty of alliance, sent him cedar trees, carpenters, and other artificers—the Tyrians being at that time much better skilled in the mechanical arts than the Israelites.

While the preparations for the permanent abode of David in the city of Jerusalem were thus advancing, the Philistines, the common enemies of Israel, resolved to check his increasing greatness, before his strength should become invincible; and with this view they raised a powerful army, marched towards Jerusalem, and encamped on the plains of Rephaim, which was separated from the fortress of Zion by the valley of Hinnom. When David received intelligence of the approach of this formidable enemy, he inquired of the Lord, "Whether he should go up to the Philistines;" and being answered in the affirmative, with the additional assurance of success, he immediately drew out his men of war, and fell upon the enemy so suddenly, and with such intrepidity, that they were completely routed —great numbers of them being slain upon the spot, while the rest, to save their lives, resorted to a precipitate flight. In their haste to escape from the fury of David's soldiers, the Philistines left their idols, which they always carried

with them to the field of battle, behind them; and when David perceived this, he ordered them all to be gathered together in one common pile, and consumed with fire.

The Philistines, however, so far from being intimidated by this defeat, soon after returned towards Jerusalem with a much more powerful army than that which had so recently been overthrown; and with this increased force they encamped upon the same plain which they had before occupied. David, on this occasion, as on the former, again consulted the Almighty respecting the manner in which he should meet this Philistine host; upon which he was informed that he should not go out boldly to attack them as before, but should conceal his army behind an adjacent wood of mulberry trees, and there remain until he should hear a movement "on the tops of the mulberry trees; for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." David strictly observed these directions, and remained, with his army in concealment until the Providential sign appeared, immediately after which he drew forth his forces, and, in the firm assurance of success, advanced, at once, to the enemy's camp. This unexpected appearance of the Israelitish army, threw the Philistine host into the utmost confusion; and David, accordingly, routing them with great ease, pursued such as fled from the field of battle as far as Gazer—a city situated on the extreme border of their country. After this second defeat the Philistines left the Israelites unmolested for many years.

The war with the Philistines being thus ended, David embraced the interval of peace which followed, to remove the Ark of God from the house of Abinadab, at Kirjath-jearim, to Jerusalem, its future resting place. As he regarded the occasion as one of great importance, he assembled the elders and principal men of the several tribes, that

they might accompany him to Kirjath-jearim in solemn procession, and thence bring the Ark to his new capital. In its removal, however, they committed an essential error; for instead of placing it upon the shoulders of the priests, as its sacred character required, they put it upon a cart drawn by two oxen. In this order they advanced to a place called Machon's threshing-floor; but as the Ark here suddenly tilted on one side, Uzzah, the driver of the oxen, fearing it would fall to the ground, placed his hand upon it to sustain it. For thus touching, with unhallowed hands, the sacred vessel, the Almighty punished Uzzah with instant death; and this melancholy circumstance so terrified David, that, lest a similar calamity should befall himself, he caused the Ark to be immediately conveyed to the house of Obed-edom, a pious Levite, with whom it remained three months. At the expiration of that time, David had the Ark borne in the most solemn manner, upon the shoulders of the priests, to the sacred place allotted for it in his new city; and at the head of the procession he himself marched, clad in a linen ephod, and dancing in the most joyful manner, to the music of his own harp.

Having thus brought the Ark to the royal city, and secured the Divine presence—the glorious Shechinah—David appointed the priests and Levites to their respective offices, and greatly increased in splendor the public worship of the Tabernacle. Henceforth Jerusalem was to be not only the *royal*, but the *sacred* city—"beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." There the solemn feasts were to be celebrated; thither the tribes were constantly to repair; and there God was to dwell between the Cherubim, and thence shine forth to bless and save his people.

In the midst of the joy and exultation which naturally attended the removal of the Tabernacle and the Ark of the

Covenant to Jerusalem, David was led to reflect that, while he himself dwelt in a cedar palace, the symbol of the Divine presence had no other protection or defense than the suspended curtains; and he, therefore, moved by a recol lection of the past mercies of the Almighty towards him, and his present repose and quiet from his enemies, resolved to build a house to the Lord, which should far surpass in splendor his own palace. Under the influence of these feelings, he addressed himself to the prophet Nathan, saying: "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Perceiving the pure and elevated motives of the king, and approving of his pious design, Nathan immediately replied: "Go, do all that is in thine heart: for God is with thee;" but on the same night the Almighty communicated to the prophet that it was His will that the honor of building a house for Divine worship should be reserved for the king's son and successor on the throne. He, therefore, through the prophet, said to David, "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish thy kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son." David no sooner received this gracious communication from God, than he repaired to the Tabernacle, and there poured forth his gratitude in expressions of the most unfeigned devotion, closing his prayer with the fervent request: "And with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever."

David being thus assured of the permanence of his kingdom, and of the peaceful succession of one of his sons to the throne; and also that his successor should build the Temple to the Almighty, the building of which he himself

had contemplated, now turned his attention towards the reduction of such of the surrounding nations as might be most likely to interrupt the effecting of this great purpose. The first of these nations against which he directed his arms was the Philistines—those inveterate and sleepless enemies of Israel; and over that haughty foe his triumph was so complete that "they troubled not Israel again for more than thirty years." David's lenity towards the Philistines may, however, have been the chief cause of the peacefulness of their conduct for so great a length of time; for, though he reduced them to a tributary state, he still left one of their own native princes to govern them.

The war with the Philistines was soon followed by one of a much more serious nature, against the Moabites. In this contest he was, however, eventually entirely successful; and after having dismantled all their strong places, he slew the greater part of the inhabitants, reserving such only as were to till the soil. The unusual severity which characterized this war, was partly attributable to a conspiracy into which the Moabites had entered, to check the rising power of the Israelites and their king.

The Moabites were scarcely subdued, before David found himself involved in a war with a much more powerful nation. Hadadezer, king of Zobah, invaded the eastern part of David's dominions, under the pretext of recovering that part of his own kingdom which bordered upon the river Euphrates. As, however, the country which the king of Zobah invaded was a part of the promised land, David immediately marched against him; and in the battle which followed, Hadadezer was so completely routed that David took "from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen." After this signal defeat Hadadezer invited the Syrians of Damascus to aid him; but, unable to resist the victorious Israelites,

their united forces were soon defeated with prodigious slaughter. David improved this second victory by marching immediately into the heart of the enemy's country, placing garrisons in their principal cities, and reducing the nations to the condition of tributaries. "And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went."

From these brilliant triumphs over the king of Zobah and the Syrians, David returned to Jerusalem with immense spoils; and as one of the immediate consequences of the war had been the relief of Toi, king of Hamath, from the oppressions of Hadadezer, that monarch, as a grateful return for so signal a favor, sent David a large present in silver and gold. All these treasures, with whatever other wealth he obtained in the course of these wars, the king of Israel sacredly dedicated to the Lord, and reserved them for the building of the future Temple.

While David was thus engaged at the north in the war with the Syrians, the Edomites, regarding the king's absence from Jerusalem as a favorable opportunity for invading the land of Israel, treacherously entered that country from the south. David, as soon as he received intelligence of this new and unprovoked attack upon his dominions, placed a part of his army under the command of Joab, and dispatched him southward to encounter the foe. After a forced march through the whole length of the land of Judah, Joab came up with the Edomites in the valley of Salt, south of the Dead Sea, and soon gained a complete victory over them. The Edomites, in this battle, were so entirely subdued that all their principal cities received Israelitish garrisons, and the whole country was made tributary to David.

During the interval of peace which followed the late wars, David reduced his government, both civil and military, to a systematic organization. His council of state

consisted of Jonathan his uncle, Ahithophel, Abiathar, Jehoiada, and Hushai, his faithful friend and companion. Seraiah was secretary of state, and Jehoshaphat recorder, Zadok and Ahimelech, the sons of Abiathar, were the chief priests, and the king's own sons his prime ministers. For the equal administration of justice amongst the different tribes of the people, over each tribe was placed a particular ruler, whose duty it was to attend to their civil affairs, and who was responsible for his conduct to the king alone.

David's standing army consisted of two hundred and eighty-eight thousand men, all of whom were to be in readiness for the king's service at a moment's warning; but in order to relieve the country from the burthen of supporting so large a force, and to make the duty of the soldiers, in times of peace, as light as possible, he arranged them in twelve divisions of twenty-four thousand each, and required the active service of but one division at a time. By this means the soldiers were, under ordinary circumstances, on duty only one month out of the year; so that eleven months of their time were still left to them to attend to the cultivation of their grounds, and their other private matters. Each of these divisions was commanded, in ordinary circumstances, by its own general; but when the whole body of the army was in requisition, or even any number of the divisions of it, Joab was commander-in-chief, and, in the absence of the king, solely directed its operations. Of the king's body-guard, the command was given to Benaiah, one of his earliest and most devoted associates in arms.

The tumult and strife of war being now comparatively over, and the civil and military arrangements of the kingdom settled, David's mind, in the repose that followed, naturally turned towards the wonderful events of the

earlier part of his life, and the extraordinary process by which the Almighty had brought him to his present exalted position. Among those events, his relation to the family of Saul occupied the most conspicuous place; and now that he was firmly seated on the throne, and his kingdom established, he recollected the solemn league of friendship into which he, in the darkest hours of his life, had entered with Saul's son Jonathan. His first inquiry, therefore, was, "Is there yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" This inquiry immediately brought into the king's presence Ziba, an old servant of Saul; and as soon as David beheld him, he repeated the question with increased emphasis, saying: "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God—the highest possible of favor—unto him?"

In answer to this earnest inquiry, Ziba informed the king that Jonathan "had yet a son living, who was lame in his feet." David had no sooner received this grateful intelligence, than he ordered Mephibosheth, the surviving son of Jonathan, alluded to by Ziba, to be brought to Jerusalem; and, when the young prince was introduced into his presence, he addressed him in tones of the warmest affection, saying to him, "Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness, for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread continually at my table." The former heritage of Saul was accordingly placed under the control of Ziba, as steward of Mephibosheth, whilst the heir of the house of Saul dwelt at court, "and eat at the king's table, as one of the king's sons." This act of generosity on the part of David towards the last member of the house of his fallen rival, was truly princely, and affords another instance, in addition to those already adduced, of the strength and purity

of his friendship for his beloved Jonathan—a friendship as rare as it was beautiful and enduring.

The peace and prosperity which followed, for some time, this noble act of generosity on the part of David, were, at length, suddenly interrupted by a strange and most unprovoked insult from the Ammonites. Nahash, their late king, and the friend and former protector of David, dying, was succeeded by his son Hanun; and when David received intelligence of these events, he sent an embassy to the young king, to condole with him on account of his father's death, and to congratulate him on his own accession to the throne; saying, to his courtiers, "I will shew kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness to me." But the counsellors of Hanun, strangely misinterpreting the intention of David in sending these ambassadors, represented them to him as spies come to discover the weakness of the city, and to ascertain in what direction it might be most successfully attacked. Under the influence of this representation, Hanun took the servants of David, "and shaved off the one-half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle;" and, thus disgraced, sent them back to their own country.

David was no sooner informed of the indignity that had been heaped upon his ambassadors by Hanun, than he resolved to resent the insult. He, therefore, when he heard of their approach, sent word to them to retire to the city of Jericho, and there remain till their beards were grown; and then dispatched Joab, at the head of a powerful army, to inflict such punishment upon the Ammonites and their king, as the baseness of their conduct deserved. The Ammonites, aware of the strength of David's army, and of the height to which they had roused his resentment, called to their aid thirty-three thousand Syrian mercenaries, whom they encamped in an adjacent field, whilst they drew up

their own forces under the walls of Rabbah, their capital city. With this disposition of the enemy's armies, Joab was well pleased, as it afforded him an opportunity of attacking them with greater advantage than though they had been all united. He, accordingly, selected the choicest of his troops, and placed them under his own command in array against the Syrians; whilst he arrayed the rest of his army, under the command of his brother Abishai, against the Ammonites. When all things were in readiness for action, Joab said to Abishai, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men, for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

These arrangements being made, Joab immediately advanced against the Syrians; and the attack upon their lines was conducted with such impetuous courage, that they at once gave way and fled, leaving a great part of their number dead upon the field of battle. The sight of the overthrow of their Syrian allies so dispirited the Ammonites, that they immediately left their camp and retreated into the city; and, as the season for military operations was then too far advanced to lay siege to the place, Joab returned, with his victorious army, to Jerusalem.

A part of the Syrian forces which had joined the Ammonites in the last campaign, belonged to the army of Hadadezer; and, as that monarch well knew that David would resent such treachery, he resolved to anticipate his action. He, therefore, levied a large army, placed it under the command of Shobach, his general, who, at its head, immediately crossed the river Jordan, and advanced as far as Halam, a city situated on the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh. When David received intelligence of this inva-

sion of his domains, he lost no time in marching against the enemy; and, coming up to them suddenly and unexpectedly, he attacked them with such vigor, that, in the action, more than forty thousand of the Syrians were slain, and their general, Shobach, receiving a mortal wound, died upon the field of battle. This overthrow of the army of Hadadezer was attended with important consequences; for many of the petty princes of the surrounding country now threw off their allegiance to him, and became tributary to David, leaving Hadadezer, thus forsaken, entirely at the mercy of the king of Israel.

After this signal victory over the Syrians, David returned to Jerusalem; and, at the opening of the following spring, he sent Joab, with a powerful army, against the Ammonites. Joab was so remarkably successful in this campaign that he triumphed in every action, and soon laid siege to Rabbah, the capital of the country. After a long, but, finally, successful siege, he reduced the city to the last extremity, and sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters. Now, therefore, come with the rest of the people, and encamp against the city, and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. And David gathered the people, and went and took Rabbah; and took the crown of the king, the weight whereof was a talent of gold, with the precious stones; and the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln"—that is, he reduced them all to slavery. With this triumph over the Ammonites, ended the glory of the earthly career of David; for the remaining twenty years of his life were as gloomy as any part of its past period had been splendid.

SECTION V.

DAVID'S Fall—His attempt to conceal his Sin—Reproof of the Prophet Nathan—David's Contrition and Repentance—Birth of SOLOMON—Incest of Amnon—Revenge of Absalom—His Reconciliation with his Father—His Revolt—David's Flight from Jerusalem—Victory of Joab and Death of Absalom—David restored to his Throne—Insurrection of Sheba.

WE have hitherto contemplated the character and career of David with almost unmingled satisfaction; for through all the varied scenes of that part of his chequered and eventful life over which we have now passed, he sustained, in an eminent degree, the testimony of the Almighty himself concerning him, that he was "A man after God's own heart."

David was not, however, perfect; and, therefore, being exposed to strong temptation, he fell; and by an act of the grossest sin, and a consequent succession of transgressions of all law, both Divine and human, he brought upon himself and his beloved people a train of evils and calamities, which continued to follow him during the remainder of his life. It is true that, by unfeigned repentance, and the deepest penitence for his aggravated sin, he at length obtained personal pardon; but the fearful retribution of Divine justice, such as ever attends the transgressions of God's own children, was not to be averted by any humiliation or sacrifice, however great. The melancholy event to which we here allude, and the particulars of which follow, occurred in 1035, A. C., when David had just passed the fiftieth year of his age.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David remained at Jerusalem; and, at the close of the day, as he was upon the roof of his palace, seeking the refreshing coolness of the evening breeze, he beheld Bathsheba, the grand-daughter of Ahithophel, and wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his most distinguished officers, and at that

very time with Joab at the siege of Rabbah, bathing in her garden. Influenced by the guilty passion which her surpassing beauty excited, he immediately sent for her, and at once passed all the restraints both of conscience and law. The fruits of his wicked act soon became manifest; and when Bathsheba informed him of her situation, David, in order, if possible, to conceal his guilt, feigned a pretext for sending for Uriah from the camp; and after some general inquiries concerning the state of the siege and the condition of the army, he dismissed him to his own house, there to await his orders to return to the army. But the brave soldier, inured to the hardships of the field, instead of going to his home spent the night with the guards of the royal palace. When David, on the following morning, learned how Uriah had passed the night, he became greatly alarmed; and he, therefore, immediately sent for him and inquired what was the cause of so extraordinary conduct; to which Uriah calmly replied, "The Ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents, and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open field; shall I then go into mine house, to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing."

Foiled, in this manner, in the plan thus cunningly devised for concealing his sin, David now invited Uriah to remain with him till the following day; and he then stooped to an act of baseness almost inconceivable: he even descended to the familiarity of drinking with him in the royal palace, and at the royal table, till he had made him drunk; hoping that, when flushed with wine, he would naturally do that which he could not be prevailed upon to do when he was sober. But drunk or sober, Uriah was the same thorough soldier; and he, therefore, still continued to abide with the king's guards.

Each of these attempts to conceal his sin having thus signally failed, the unhappy king saw now no other resource than to plunge still more deeply into crime. He, therefore, resolved that Uriah should die; and, in order that no public suspicion might rest upon himself, he sent him back to the camp, bearing a letter to Joab containing the following order:—*Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die.*" This order to Joab was but too faithfully fulfilled: Uriah fell: the monarch was freed from present danger; and after Bathsheba had observed the usual days of mourning for her husband, David publicly espoused her, and she thus became his lawful wife and bare him a son.

The most remarkable circumstance in connection with these wicked transactions is, that David himself seems, throughout the whole affair, to have been entirely unconscious of the enormity of his guilt. No remorse is felt; no confession is made, and no prayer for mercy is heard. But though sin had thus, for a time, stupified his conscience, and concealed from his own view his great crime, yet the sleepless eye of the Almighty was upon him; "and the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord." God, therefore, appeared to the prophet Nathan, and commissioned him to go to the king, spread before him the whole extent of his offense, and announce the dreadful punishment which he had thus wickedly brought upon himself and his kingdom. Nathan, who was a wise and prudent man, did not, however, break the subject to his sovereign abruptly; but, by relating to him the following fable, artfully led David to pronounce judgment upon himself.

"There were," said Nathan, "two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing

save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him." Nathan had no sooner closed this simple narrative than David, fired with resentment, exclaimed, "As the Lord liveth, the man that has done this thing shall surely die, and shall restore the lamb fourfold." The king being thus prepared to receive the sentence the prophet had been commissioned by the Almighty to pronounce upon him, "Nathan said unto David, *Thou art the Man.* Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel; and delivered thee from the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives, and the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandments of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah, and hast taken his wife for thy wife. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them to thy neighbor, for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel."

This fearful sentence had the desired effect. David's conscience was roused from its slumbers: he was at once convicted of his sin; and like every other true penitent, he confessed his transgression without extenuation or excuse. "I have sinned," said he, "against the Lord;" and then proceeded, with a broken and contrite heart, to make that

solemn and affecting record of his confession which is contained in the Fifty-first Psalm. This ingenuous confession, and the deep penitence which attended it, were grateful to the Almighty; and he therefore directed Nathan to pronounce, in the following terms, the king's pardon:—"The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die. But since, by this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born unto thee shall surely die."

The child, in accordance with this declaration of the prophet, was immediately taken ill; and though David "humbled himself, fasted and besought God for the child," yet, on the seventh day after the commencement of its illness, it died. During the illness of the child David refused all sustenance, and lay upon the ground in deep distress; but when he perceived that it was dead, "he rose from the earth, anointed himself, and went into the house of the Lord and worshipped, and came to his house and took the food offered him." Surprised at this conduct, the elders of David's household asked him the cause of it; and the king replied, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

The death of Bathsheba's first-born son was soon followed by the birth of another, whom David named Solomon, which signifies *Peaceful;* but by the prophet Nathan, to whose care he was early committed, he was called Jedediah, or *Favored of the Lord.* The birth of Solomon occurred in 1033 A. C.

At the time of David's melancholy fall, the Hebrew kingdom had attained the height of its splendor. He was the greatest and best of its monarchs, and his reign

had hitherto been prosperous, almost beyond a parallel: but his star was now fast sinking in the horizon, and from this time forward it is to be darkened by the cloud of "domestic shame, misery, and confusion."

The loss of the child, the particulars of which we have just given, was soon followed by a much heavier stroke of domestic calamity. Amnon, his eldest son, conceived a most violent passion for his half-sister Tamar, the king's only daughter; and, in order to gain possession of her person, he, by the advice of his cousin Jonadab, feigned sickness, and then requested of his father that his sister might be allowed to attend upon him, and prepare, with her own hands, such nourishment as he should require. The king, not suspecting any evil, readily granted his son's request; but the innocent and helpless Tamar no sooner entered the chamber of the brutal Amnon, than he seized her person, sated his beastly passion, and then violently thrust her forth from his presence, to bear in sorrow her shame. In lamentation and the deepest anguish, Tamar hastened to the house of her own brother Absalom, and there revealed to him all that had transpired. Absalom, upon hearing his sister's sad story, at once resolved upon seeking such revenge as the unheard of outrage demanded; and, in order the more certainly to effect his purpose, he desired Tamar to remain, for the present, an inmate of his house, and patiently bear the injury she had received, until the time of retribution should arrive.

A report of this gross and unnatural crime soon reached the ears of the king; but, for some reason—perhaps the remembrance of his own sin—David seems to have taken no farther notice of the offense or the offender, than to exclude him from attendance at court. In this way two tedious years passed, during the whole of which the passion of revenge lay smouldering in Absalom's heart; but,

though retribution was so long delayed, it was still certain eventually to come. The period of the feast of sheep-shearing was now at hand; and Absalom resolved to embrace this occasion for executing the dreadful purpose over which his mind had been so long brooding. With this view he announced his intention of holding the great festival at his estate near Ephraim; and, in order to add to the dignity and importance of the occasion, he requested his father and all his brethren to honor him with their presence. This invitation was declined by the king, and it was with great reluctance that he allowed Amnon to attend; but still, on the departure of Absalom from Jerusalem, David blessed him, and wished him prosperity.

With his father's benediction and blessing resting upon him, Absalom immediately repaired to the scene of the intended feast; and he was there joined by all the king's family excepting Tamar, who still remained at home bewailing her unhappy lot. To effect the dreadful purpose of his revenge the more surely, Absalom had given strict orders to his servants to fall upon Amnon in the midst of the feast and put him to death; assuring them that, as they would act by his directions, he would protect them—saying, "Have not I commanded you: be courageous and valiant." The servants of Absalom did as they were commanded: Amnon fell by their hands; and the rest of the king's sons, as soon as they saw what had been done, rose from the table and fled to Jerusalem. When David received intelligence of the awful scene that had been enacted at the feast, he, in the anguish of his spirit, "arose from his seat, tore his garments, and lay upon the earth."

Thus the sin of which Amnon had been guilty in his cruel treatment of his sister Tamar, became the cause of his own death; and so it often happens, under the righteous

providence of God, that one sin is made the punishment of another. In the assassination of Amnon, David himself could not fail to see another just retaliation of the Almighty upon his own aggravated sin in the murder of Uriah; and the fresh recollection of that foul deed, must have greatly enhanced the bitterness of his grief.

Absalom, immediately after the murder of Amnon, fled for protection to the court of his grandfather Talmai, king of Geshur, and there remained during the three following years. But at length David, as his grief for the loss of Amnon gradually wore away, began to long for the return of Absalom—who was now his oldest son—to Jerusalem. This being perceived by the subtle and far-seeing Joab, he, by an artifice, not unlike, in its tendency and effect upon the mind, the parable of the ewe-lamb, related by the prophet Nathan on another occasion, obtained the king's consent to bring Absalom home from his exile. Joab, accordingly, soon after repaired, for this purpose, to Geshur, and in a few days returned with Absalom to Jerusalem; but two full years elapsed after his restoration, before David would consent to see his face. At length, however, the king consented that Absalom should be brought into his presence; and when Joab called for him, he "came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom."

The reconciliation thus artfully brought about by Joab between Absalom and his father, placed Absalom in a position to carry into effect the design which he seems to have, for some time, contemplated, of usurping the government of the kingdom. He was the oldest living son of the king, and the apparent heir to the crown; but the glowing and undisguised affection of David for the son of Bathsheba, the care bestowed upon his education by the prophet Nathan, and the extraordinary promise of Solomon him-

self, who had now reached the eighth or ninth year of his age, left no doubt upon the public mind that the king designed him for his successor. These evident indications in favor of Solomon, led Absalom to perceive that no time was now to be lost, if he expected to accomplish his purpose of usurpation; and he, therefore, availing himself of his personal accomplishments and winning manners, began at once, as a preliminary step, to ingratiate himself into favor with the people. With this view, "he stood beside the way to the palace; and it was so that when any man had a controversy, and came to the king for judgment, Absalom inquired into the cause, and told him, 'See, thy matters are good and right, but none will hear thee from the king.'"

By such artful insinuations against his father's government, and by the indiscriminate flattery of all who came to court, Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of Israel," and as soon as he thought the people sufficiently prepared for rebellion, he, under the mask of piety, requested the king's permission to go to the sacred city of Hebron to pay a vow which he had made during his exile. David, not suspecting the treason contemplated, and, doubtless, pleased with his son's pious purpose, readily granted his request; and Absalom, therefore, immediately set out for Hebron, accompanied by two hundred of the most distinguished citizens of Jerusalem, from all of whom he had, however, carefully concealed his design. Before his departure for Hebron he had sent spies "throughout all the tribes of Israel," with a message to the chief men of each tribe, saying, "As soon as you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say Absalom reigneth in Hebron."

Amongst other distinguished personages who followed Absalom from Jerusalem to Hebron, was Ahithophel, David's chief counsellor. This eminent statesman, it will

be remembered, was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and as he was evidently privy to the conspiracy against the king from its incipiency, we may, from his known character, presume that he was prompted to take part with Absalom in retaliation for the indelible stain which David had brought upon his family. Soon after he arrived at Hebron, therefore, he united with the party of Absalom in proclaiming him king; and as his fame and influence were very great, he, doubtless, contributed, in no small degree, towards inducing the people to flock to the standard of Absalom in such numbers that "the conspiracy was strong."

Intelligence of all that had passed at Hebron was soon communicated to David at Jerusalem; and when he learned that "the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom," he resolved to leave the city at once, saying, "lest Absalom overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." As soon as the resolution of the king to leave Jerusalem became known, all who still remained faithful to his government prepared to accompany him. His body guard, composed of Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites, marched in the van; and when David, soon after their departure from the city, saw Ittai, the leader of the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath, with the rest, he entreated him to return to Jerusalem, assuring him, that being a stranger, Absalom would not molest him. But this faithful proselyte to the faith of Israel, and adherent to the cause of the king, generously replied, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord, the king, liveth, surely in what place, my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also will thy servant be."

As the fugitive king and his faithful followers advanced towards the wilderness by the way of the brook Kidron, the spectacle was affecting in the extreme; "And all

the country wept with a loud voice, and the people passed over: the king himself also passed over the brook Kidron, towards the way of the wilderness." Soon after David had entered the wilderness, he was joined by the priests Zadok and Abiathar, attended by the whole body of the Levites, "bearing the Ark of the covenant of God;" but David no sooner saw the Ark than he directed the priests to return with it to the city; saying, in pious resignation to the Divine will, "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and shew me both it and his habitation; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." The Ark of God was accordingly carried back to Jerusalem, and David remained in the wilderness until he received intelligence from Zadok and Abiathar, who continued faithful to him throughout his exile, of all that was passing in the city.

From his first resting place, David advanced farther into the wilderness; and as he ascended mount Olivet, "he wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head and went up, weeping as they went." While David was resting upon the top of the mountain he was informed that Ahithophel had joined the conspiracy against him; and as he well knew that the counsel of that distinguished statesman was "as if a man enquired of the oracle of God," he immediately lifted up his voice in fervent supplication to the Almighty, saying, "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." At that very moment, and as though in answer to David's prayer, his faithful friend Hushai joined him; and the idea at once occurred to the king that he might use the wisdom and address of this trusty counsellor to defeat the wicked purposes of Ahithophel. With this view he sent him back to Jerusa-

lem, but directed him to conceal the design with which he had returned.

Hushai had scarcely left the king, before Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, arrived at the royal camp with a large supply of provisions for David and his followers. This was a seasonable and timely relief; and to the king's kind inquiry after his master, Ziba perfidiously replied, "He abideth at Jerusalem; for he said, To-day, shall the house of Israel restore the kingdom of my father." This false representation of the conduct of Mephibosheth, greatly incensed David; and he therefore revoked the grant of lands formerly bestowed upon, as he supposed, the faithless son of Jonathan, and bestowed them upon his more faithful servant. But Ziba had intentionally prevented Mephibosheth from following David, by not making those preparations for him which the lameness of the young prince unfitted him to make for himself.

While the friends of the king were thus succoring and comforting him, his enemies were not idle. Among the most conspicuous of the latter, was "Shimei, the son of Gera, of the family of Saul, who came out and cursed still as he came." This infuriated man, in his rage, followed David into the wilderness, and "cast stones at the king, and said, Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial; the Lord hath returned upon thee the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned." Such bitter insults would have been revenged by Abishai and the other officers who surrounded their monarch's person, could they have obtained his permission, by the instant death of the offender; but David, instead of seconding their just indignation, meekly replied, "If my son seeketh my life, how much more may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and

that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

When Hushai arrived at Jerusalem he found Absalom in possession of the city; and approaching the usurper, he gave him the usual salutation of "God save the king." This apparent flattery was at first received by Absalom with great coldness, and he even reproved Hushai for his unkindness to his former friend; but when Hushai artfully replied, "Whom the Lord and all Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide; as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence"—with this explanation of Hushai Absalom was satisfied, and he immediately placed him among his counsellors. In the council that was soon after called, Ahithophel first "urged Absalom to take public possession of his father's concubines," and then allow him, without a moment's delay, to pursue his father with twelve thousand choice troops; saying, "I will smite the king only, and will bring back the people unto thee in peace." The former part of this counsel was at once followed, and thus was fulfilled one of Nathan's awful threatenings to David; but against the latter, Absalom was artfully cautioned by Hushai, who said, "Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is now hid in some hold. I, therefore, counsel that all Israel be gathered for the fight—that thou go to battle in thine own person—that thus with the whole host we light upon thy father as dew falleth on the ground."

Had the advice of Ahithophel, in this desperate state of David's affairs, been followed, the king would, in all human probability, have fallen; but the specious counsel of Hushai prevailed, "For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good

counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." As soon as Ahithophel perceived that the counsel of Hushai was to be followed in preference to his own, he saw that all was lost; and, in order to escape from the consequences which he knew must follow the restoration of David to the throne, he repaired "to his own house and hanged himself."

The counsel of Hushai had no sooner been adopted by Absalom, than that tried and faithful friend of David sent him intelligence of the event, and advised him to pass, without delay, beyond the Jordan. In accordance with this advice, David and his followers immediately crossed the river, and encamped at Mahanaim; and in that fruitful district he had an opportunity to recruit his wearied followers, and to call to his standard all those brave men amongst his subjects who still remained loyal to their king. At the same time his camp was abundantly supplied with provisions by some of his faithful subjects and allies, of whom, among the former, was the venerable Barzillai, the Gileadite.

While David was thus preparing for the approaching conflict, Absalom was by no means inactive. He knew that the fate of the kingdom was to turn upon a single battle; and he, therefore, gathered together all the men of Israel, made Amasa, Joab's nephew, captain of the host, and placing himself at the head of the whole army, passed over the river Jordan in pursuit of his father. At the approach of Absalom's army, David arranged his own forces in three divisions; the first led by Joab, the second by Abishai, and the third by Ittai, the Gittite; whilst he himself remained in the city with a reserve force to bring to their aid, should it be found necessary. Confident of victory, David's chief concern seems to have been for the fate of Absalom; and he, therefore, as the army marched

out to battle, charged his generals, in the presence of all the people, saying, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

The two armies met in the land of Gilead, and the battle was fought in the woods of Ephraim, on the east side of the Jordan. Absalom's forces, after an obstinate resistance, finally gave way; and, being closely pursued by Joab's division of the royal army, they were completely defeated, leaving twenty thousand slain in the action, and in the subsequent flight. The rebel himself, as soon as he saw that all was lost, attempted to escape through the adjacent wood; but being caught by the hair in the branches of an oak, his mule passed from under him, and thus left him suspended "between the heaven and the earth." In this situation Absalom was soon found by one of Joab's soldiers, who immediately conveyed the intelligence to his general; and Joab, after administering a severe reproof to the man for not having slain him at once, hastened himself to the spot, and thrust him through with his spear. Thus perished the elegant and accomplished Absalom; leaving no other monument of his ambition than a pillar which he himself had erected in the "King's Dale;" and which now served only to perpetuate the remembrance of his infamous and unnatural crimes.

When David received intelligence of the result of the battle, his first inquiry was, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" and when he was informed of his melancholy fate, his grief knew no bounds. "He went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he wept, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" When Joab heard of the immoderate grief of David for the death of Absalom, and saw its effect upon the army, he entered boldly into the presence of the king, and severely

remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct. This remonstrance, though unbecoming in a subject, had the desired effect; and "David arose and sat in the gate, and all the people came before the king."

The death of Absalom put an effectual end to the conspiracy, and the mass of the people at once renewed their loyalty to the king. The tribe of Judah did not, however, move so early as the rest; and this circumstance gave David so much concern that he sent a messenger to the elders of Judah, saying, "Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh, why are ye the last then to bring back the king to his home?" To Amasa, Absalom's general, David sent the following more particular message:— "Art not thou of my bone and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually, in the room of Joab." These messages had the desired effect. "The heart of all the men of Judah was turned to David as the heart of one man, and they said unto the king, Return thou and all thy servants."

The return of the tribe of Judah to their allegiance, induced David to leave Mahanaim, where he had remained for some time after his victory, and conduct his faithful followers back to Jerusalem. When he arrived at the river Jordan he was met by the whole tribe of Judah, who had come thither to conduct their king to his capital; and these were accompanied by Shimei, at the head of a thousand Benjamites, and also by the treacherous Ziba, with his sons and servants. As soon as Abishai the general, saw Shimei, he was fired with indignation at his audacity, and desired the king to allow him to put him instantly to death, "because he had cursed the Lord's anointed." But David, now conscious of the strength of his present position, and not willing to stoop to an act of revenge, accepted the traitor's apology, and spared his

life. To Ziba, whose treachery to his master he had not yet discovered, he renewed the grant of an equal share with Mephibosheth, in the latter's patrimonial inheritance.

The aged and faithful Barzillai also came to meet his sovereign; and when David beheld him, under the grateful recollection of his timely succor at Mahanaim, he invited him to go up with him to Jerusalem, saying, "Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem." Barzillai, however, pleaded his own great age as an excuse for not accepting the king's invitation to accompany him to Jerusalem; but, at the same time, he recommended to the royal munificence his son Chimham, whom David accordingly took with him, and afterwards settled on a part of his own patrimonial estate near Bethlehem, and thenceforth the place itself received the name of Chimham.

When David, attended by the tribe of Judah and his other immediate followers, arrived at Gilgal, he found assembled at that place the different tribes of Israel, to welcome his return; but when these tribes learned that the tribe of Judah had been particularly summoned by David to attend him, they became greatly incensed, and openly charged the men of Judah with having "stolen the king from their brethren." To this charge the leaders of the tribe of Judah replied with such fierceness, that the other tribes resolved, at once, to abandon the cause of the king; and Sheba, a Benjamite, taking advantage of the strife, immediately blew the trumpet of sedition, and exclaimed, in the midst of the people, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel."

The insurrection thus excited by Sheba, soon assumed so formidable an aspect, that David, immediately after his arrival at Jerusalem, directed Amasa "to assemble the men of Judah," and hold himself in readiness for

farther orders. Amasa, however, being dilatory in his preparations, and the insurrection becoming daily more serious, the king at length commissioned Abishai to place himself at once at the head of a sufficient force to quell it. Abishai, accompanied by Joab, took, in accordance with his commission, "the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and the mighty men, and pursued after Sheba." At Gibeon they met with Amasa; and Joab, notwithstanding he was his own nephew, through envy of Amasa's recent promotion, and under the cover of an assumed salutation of friendship, immediately stabbed him to the heart. Leaving an officer to guard the body, Abishai and Joab pressed forward in pursuit of Sheba; and when they learned that he had collected, out of the different tribes, a considerable force, and had taken possession of Abel-Bethmaachah, they immediately marched thither and laid siege to the city.

The siege had been continued but a short time before a prudent woman of the city appeared upon the walls, and addressing herself to Joab, said, "I am one of them that are peaceful and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" To this appeal Joab replied, "Far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy. I seek only Sheba, who hath lifted up his hand against the king: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." This proposal, seconded by the influence of the woman who had appealed to the general, was accepted by the chief men of the city: the head of Sheba was cut off and thrown over the wall, and the brave, haughty, and imperious Joab returned in triumph to Jerusalem. He had now, however, to the murder of Abner, added the more atrocious and deliberate murder of Amasa; and, though the Divine vengeance due to such crimes seemed to slumber for a time, yet it eventually awoke in all its fury.

SECTION VI.

DAVID:—The Land of Israel visited by Famine—War with the Philistines—The Numbering of the People—Its Consequences—David's approaching Dissolution—Solomon designated as his Successor—Adonijah attempts to usurp the Throne—Solomon anointed King—David's Address to him, and to the People—Directions respecting Joab, Shimei, and Barzillai—David's Death and Character

MORE than twenty years elapsed between the sentence pronounced upon David's transgression by the prophet Nathan and the death of Sheba; and the whole of that dreary period was filled up with distressing cares and civil strife. Humiliation and grief for his own sin, mortification for the unnatural and sinful conduct of his sons, and the facility with which his subjects were drawn aside from their allegiance to him, left few intervals of peace to the unhappy monarch. And yet, in the hours of his bitterest anguish, the picture which he presents of a stricken spirit, in the presence of his justly offended God, forms, perhaps, the most beautiful feature of his whole character.

While David was congratulating himself on his restoration to the throne, and the return of tranquillity and peace to his kingdom, the whole of the land of Israel was visited by a famine, which continued, without abatement, for three successive years. During the first and second years of its continuance, the famine seems to have assumed no very extraordinary aspect; but in the early part of the third year, it became so dreadfully severe, that David was led to regard it as a direct visitation of Providence for some unatoned sin. He was moved, therefore, to inquire of the Lord what it was that had brought this severe judgment upon the land; and, in reply to his inquiry, the Almighty answered, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because they slew the Gibeonites."

The ancestors of these Gibeonites, it will be remembered,

had fraudulently obtained from Joshua a treaty of alliance, which was solemnly ratified by a public oath; and, though the fraud was afterwards discovered, yet, as the oath to the treaty had been taken "in the name of the Lord God of Israel," it could not be violated: the lives, and even the cities of the Gibeonites were, therefore, spared; but the people were all reduced to a state of slavery. In this situation they remained until that period in the reign of Saul, when, in his rage, he slew the priests of Nob, and great numbers of the Gibeonites, who were the servants of the priests, along with them. Saul had, also, previously slain many of the Gibeonites, "in," as he pretended, "his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah." It was these cruelties and violations of public faith, that the Almighty now required to be atoned for; and as soon, therefore, as David knew the cause of the grievous calamity which rested upon Israel, he sent to the remnant of the Gibeonites, saying, "What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?" To this inquiry the Gibeonites replied, "We desire neither silver nor gold; but that seven men of the sons of Saul, who had consumed them, should be delivered unto us, and we will bring them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul."

Knowing, from what had already passed, that it was the will of God that the Gibeonites should be avenged, David immediately prepared to comply with this request; but lest he should be suspected of designing to remove any of the line of Saul who might become competitors of his own family for the throne, he passed over all Saul's male descendants, and selected the two sons of his concubine Rizpah, and the five sons of Merah, his youngest daughter. These seven descendants of Saul being delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites, "they hanged them

in the hill before the Lord." In her affliction for the cruel fate of her sons, the maternal affection of Rizpah was exhibited in all its melancholy tenderness; and, in order to guard their suspended remains from injury, "she took sackcloth and spread it upon a rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." Intelligence of this devotion of Rizpah to the protection of her sons, even after their death, being communicated to David, the king was deeply moved; and he sent for the bones of the whole seven that had been hanged, and gave them honorable burial. "And David also took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh Gilead, and buried them in the sepulchre of Kish, his father: and after that God was entreated for the land," and prosperity again returned to Israel.

The calamity of the famine had scarcely passed before the Philistines, those ever restless enemies of Israel, once more invaded the country. To repel them David immediately led forth a powerful army in person; and, though successful in the battle that followed, yet, exerting himself in the conflict beyond his strength, he became exhausted; and in this state he was attacked by a Philistine giant, who would have slain him, had not Abishai come to his relief, and killed his antagonist. The exposure of the king on this occasion, so greatly alarmed the army, that they immediately resolved to restrain him thenceforth from accompanying them to the battle-field; and they, therefore, in the beautiful language of the sacred historian, sware unto him, saying, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." Three other battles with the Philistines followed in rapid succession; and in each conflict the armies of Israel were so signally success-

ful, that these inveterate enemies were effectually subdued, and the rest of David's reign was consequently free from foreign wars.

For these successive triumphs over his most inveterate enemies, and also for all his past successes, David had now so deep a sense of his indebtedness to Divine aid, that he publicly poured forth his expression of thanksgiving to the Almighty, in that beautiful hymn of praise and grateful acknowledgment which is found recorded in the twenty-second chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and also in the eighteenth Psalm. After recapitulating his trust in God in times of distress, and the many wonderful deliverances which he had experienced, he closes the whole hymn in the following elevated and appropriate strain: "Jehovah is the tower of salvation for his king, and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David and to his seed for evermore. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, I will sing praises unto thy name."

The Israelites enjoyed, after these closing wars with the Philistines, a considerable interval of peace, prosperity, and happiness; and, in the midst of this repose and quiet, there was every appearance that David's long and eventful reign would close. But in an evil hour, David, in direct violation of the Divine command, was tempted to number the people; and he, therefore, directed Joab to go forth throughout the land, and take the census of the different tribes. Joab, however, well knowing that such a step would be offensive to God, and of evil consequences to the people, remonstrated against the measure, saying, "The Lord make his people an hundred times as many as they be; but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing, and make himself a cause of trespass to Israel?" Joab's remonstrance, however, proved ineffectual, and he reluctantly went forth to number the people. They began on

the east side of the river Jordan, and thence passing through the northern part of the kingdom, they returned, at the expiration of nine months and twenty days, to Jerusalem. The number of men in Israel capable of bearing arms, was, according to Joab's estimate, one million three hundred thousand; but as the whole matter was irksome, and even odious to him, the census was not completed: "the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not counted."

David had no sooner received the account of the number of his people, than he became conscious that what he had done was offensive to the Almighty; and he, therefore, in the most fervent and penitent manner, entreated forgiveness. "I have sinned," said he, "greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." This frank confession assuaged, in some degree, the anger of the Almighty, but did not atone for the offense; and God, therefore, sent the prophet Gad to David, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee: either seven years of famine, or three months' flight before thine enemies, or three days' pestilence in thy land." Of these proposed punishments, David chose the last; and he, therefore, said unto the prophet, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are his mercies; and let me not fall into the hand of man." The pestilence, accordingly, came, and it swept with such terrific destruction through the land that, before the three days had expired, "there fell of Israel seventy thousand men."

When the destroying angel, in passing through the land, came to Jerusalem, the Almighty said to him, "It is enough,; stay now thine hand;" and as David beheld this pause in the work of destruction, he prostrated him-

self before the Divine messenger, and, assuming all the sin and guilt of the recent offense, exclaimed, "Lo, I have sinned, and have done wickedly. Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house, but not on my people, that they should be plagued." By this solemn humiliation, and intercession for his people, David appeased the wrath of the Almighty, and, therefore, God sent the prophet to him with directions to erect "an altar unto the Lord, in the threshing-floor of Araunah"—the place at which the angel had paused. David, in accordance with this command, went immediately to Araunah, purchased the land, "and built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the plague was stayed from Israel." The spot upon which this altar was built, was Mount Moriah—the place where the patriarch Abraham had, many centuries before, prepared to offer up his son Isaac, and around which Solomon soon after erected his magnificent Temple.

The active and varied life of David was now rapidly drawing to a close. He had nearly reached the seventieth year of his age, and the pressure of bodily infirmities rested heavily upon him. In this comparatively helpless condition, he was surprised with the intelligence that Adonijah, his eldest son living, was preparing to usurp the throne. It was, doubtless, well understood at court that David designed to leave the succession to Solomon; but Adonijah, in opposition to his father's known intentions, claimed the throne as his lawful inheritance. In his personal appearance, and in the ease and elegance of his address, he remarkably resembled Absalom; and like him, he had now, for some time, maintained a princely state and retinue. Having communicated his design to Joab, who was still at the head of the army, and to Abiathar the chief priest, and being by both encouraged in his enterprise, he felt certain

of success; and he, therefore, caused to be prepared a sumptuous banquet at Enrogel, near Jerusalem, to which he "invited the king's sons and the men of Judah"—to the exclusion, however, of all who were known to be friendly to Solomon. As his coronation was immediately to follow the close of the entertainment, Adonijah very naturally supposed that the presence of a large number of the royal household would be of the utmost importance to the success of his cause; and it was on this account, therefore, that of the court and family of the king, the only important personages who were not invited to the feast, were Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the captain of the guards, and his brother Solomon.

The purpose of Adonijah was, however, frustrated by the vigilance of Nathan, who was no sooner informed of what was going on at Enrogel, than he hastened to Bathsheba, and urged her to communicate, without delay, the intelligence to David. Bathsheba, greatly alarmed at what she had heard, went at once to the apartment of the king, and prostrating herself before him, said, in the most earnest manner, "My lord, thou swearest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me; and now Adonijah reigneth, and thou knowest it not. And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldst tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him." Bathsheba had scarcely finished her address to the king before the prophet Nathan entered the apartment, and confirmed all that she had said; upon which David, in the most solemn manner, confirmed his former promise that Solomon should be his successor, saying, "As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and shall sit upon

my throne in my stead, even so will I certainly do this day."

The imminence of the danger, however, of having David's purpose thwarted, admitted of no delay; and he, therefore, immediately directed Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the captain of the guard, saying, "Take Solomon my son and cause him to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, and let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel; for he shall be king in my stead, and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah." In accordance with this direction, Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, accompanied by the Cherethites and Pelethites, went down to Gihon, and there anointed Solomon king, "and they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, God save king Solomon; and they rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them." These public rejoicings of the people at the peaceful succession of Solomon to the throne, were soon known at Enrogel; and the banquet of Adonijah was, consequently, suddenly broken up "and every man went his own way." Adonijah himself fled, and "took hold upon the horns of the altar;" but Solomon sent for him, publicly pardoned him, and allowed him to return to his own house in peace.

Solomon being thus firmly seated on the throne, and the civil government of the kingdom established, David "gathered together the princes of Israel, and the Priests and Levites," and regulated the future order of public worship. These regulations had reference to the worship to be observed in the Temple which David had designed to build, and for which he had made extensive preparations; but the honor of erecting the building was reserved for his son Solomon. The whole number of Levites at this time, who had passed the thirtieth year of their age, was thirty-eight

thousand. Of these, twenty-four thousand were to carry forward the work of the Temple, six thousand were to be judges and officers, four thousand, to be porters, and four thousand were to conduct the offerings of praise and thanksgiving. The solemn and gorgeous Temple service being thus provided for, the splendid ritual of the Old Testament economy was completed, and David's specific work was done. Under his government the covenant people were established in the possession of the promised land, and the Ark of God, with the visible sign of the Divine presence upon it, had found a resting place; the chosen spot for the Temple had been designated, and the order of the services therein to be observed, defined: David had, therefore, nothing more to do than to deliver his dying charge to the people and to Solomon, and then go to rest with his fathers. These charges we shall give in his own appropriate and beautiful language.

"And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. Then David the king stood up upon his feet and said, Hear me, my brethren and my people: as for me, I had it in mine heart to build a house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: but God said unto me, Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler, and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and

among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom, if he be content to do my commandments, and my judgments, as at this day. Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever."

To this general address to the people, David added a par ticular exhortation that they would follow his own example, and freely consecrate of their substance to the building of the contemplated Temple. To this appeal the king immediately received a hearty response; and "They offered willingly and rejoiced, because with perfect heart they offered unto the Lord. They gave liberally of gold, silver, brass and iron, besides precious stones for the service of the house of God." This willing and joyful sacrifice of the people filled David's heart with such gratitude and delight, that he offered public thanks to the Almighty, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel our father for ever and for ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. * * * O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast

pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people; and prepare their heart unto thee: and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision." In this public thanksgiving the whole assembly, with one voice, united; and their praise ascended as sweet incense to the Almighty.

Having closed his address to the people; and his solemn thanksgiving to God, David turned to Solomon and said, "And thou Solmon my son, Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it." He then gave him the pattern for the Temple with its porches and buildings, an account of the materials he had collected, and the order of Priests and Levites which he had arranged, and concluded by again charging the young king, saying, "Be strong, and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the house of the Lord." These directions and exhortations were followed on the part of the people by a second profession of allegiance to Solomon as king; and thus firmly seated on the throne, he commences his

reign amidst the joyful acclamations of his loyal subjects. "And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel."

David had still a solemn and important duty to perform respecting Joab, Shimei, and Barzillai; and as he felt that death was rapidly approaching, he once more called Solomon to him and gave him his final charge. "I go," said he, "the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, as written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper, and that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me." He then charged him to remember Joab, saying, "Do according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." It will be remembered that Joab had deliberately murdered Abner and Amasa; and though, through his peculiar influence with the army, he had hitherto escaped the punishment which his crimes so richly deserved, yet David could not die in peace till justice was vindicated, and his throne and government cleansed of any share in the murder of these innocent men: he, therefore, charged Solomon to cause Joab to be publicly executed as a murderer. With regard to Shimei, the directions given by David were, that though he was not to be treated as a guiltless man, yet, as he had come out to welcome him on his return to Jerusalem at the close of the rebellion of Absalom, his life was to be spared: "Bring thou, therefore," said David, "his hoar hair down to the grave with blood." Solomon, accordingly, spared the life of Shimei; but he directed him to build a habitation in the city of Jerusalem, and there permanently to abide; but Shimei was afterwards put to death for breaking his parole of honor. In the midst of these

closing and exciting scenes of David's life, the kindness of Barzillai was not forgotten; and he, therefore, impressed it upon Solomon as a solemn duty to cherish the remembrance of it, "and to deal favorably with his sons: to let them be as these that eat at thy table."

The shades of death now thickly settling upon the closing scenes of David's eventful life, his last words were, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire; although he make it not to grow." "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David." Thus died the sweet singer of Israel, in the seventy-first year of his age, 1015 A. C., and after a reign of forty years, seven of which were passed at Hebron, and thirty-three at Jerusalem.

In whatever light we view the character of David, we must certainly regard him as one of the greatest and best, not only of monarchs, but of men. As a man, he was affectionate and generous; noble in all his impulses, forgiving to his enemies, and grateful to his friends. As a warrior, his frequent and brilliant victories abundantly testify to his ability. As a king, he was wise in council, and energetic in carrying out the plans of his government—using his power as conscious of his accountability to God, he was ever kind to the suffering, and impartial in the execution of justice. As an inspired poet, his name and memory will ever be warmly cherished by every pious

heart; and as a worshipper of the true God, he was steadfast, sincere, humble, and trustful. It is true, he sadly fell, but grievously did he suffer for it; and, when reproof of his sins was administered by the prophet, he bowed before God in the most unfeigned penitence and humility, and, in broken-hearted confession, continued his supplications until he obtained an abiding sense of pardoning mercy.

SECTION VII.

SOLOMON:—Intrigue of Adonijah—His Death—Punishment of Abiathar—Death of Joab—Extent of Solomon's Dominions—His Superhuman Wisdom—Tested in the Case of the two Women—General Prosperity of his Kingdom—Description of Jerusalem and its Vicinity—Its Walls and Gardens—The TEMPLE—Its unparalleled Riches and Magnificence.

DAVID, at his death, left the kingdom of Israel in universal peace and unparalleled prosperity. By the valor of his arms, and the wisdom of his government, he had made all the surrounding nations either his tributaries or his allies; and Solomon, his son, therefore, ascended the throne under the most favorable auspices. In addition to this enviable condition of the nation, he enjoyed the advantage of having been publicly designated by his father as his successor; and this act of designation had not only received the Divine approbation, but had afforded universal satisfaction to the people.

The restless spirit of Adonijah could not, however, quietly submit to the exaltation of his younger brother over him; and he, therefore, now attempted to effect by art, that which he had failed to accomplish more openly, before his father's death. With this view he addressed himself to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, and entreated her to ask for him, of the king, Abishag, the

youthful wife of his father David, in marriage. Bathsheba, not realizing the criminal nature and object of Adonijah's request, consented, without hesitation, to do as he desired her; but she had no sooner preferred her petition to the king, than he saw its treasonable design, and knew that so bold a proceeding must have originated with Abiathar and Joab, Adonijah's chief accomplices in his former attempt upon the throne. Solomon, therefore, indignantly replied to his mother, "Why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is mine elder brother. God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life." The king, therefore, immediately dispatched Benaiah, the captain of the guards, to Adonijah, with orders to put him instantly to death.

Solomon, having thus removed Adonijah, the chief troubler of his throne, out of the way, next sent for Abiathar the high-priest, and at once banished him from both the court and from his priestly office; saying unto him, "Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death; but I will not, at this time, put thee to death, because thou barest the Ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted." Joab, aware of his own participation in the guilt of Adonijah and Abiathar, well knew that the vengeance of the king would soon overtake him also; and he, therefore, immediately "fled unto the Tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the Altar." This sacred retreat was not, however, sufficient to protect him; for Solomon no sooner heard where he was, than he sent Benaiah to bring him thence and publicly execute him: and, as Joab refused to leave the sanctuary, he was slain by Benaiah in that sacred place, and afterwards "buried in his own

house, in the wilderness." Thus ignobly fell David's bravest and most distinguished general; and had his virtues equalled his military genius, he would still be gratefully remembered as the chief supporter of his illustrious monarch's throne. His place as commander-in-chief of the army was filled by the faithful Benaiah, while Zadok was made high-priest in the room of Abiathar.

Having thus removed the leaders of the faction that opposed his succession to the crown, Solomon's throne was established in peace. His kingdom was of vast dimensions, extending "even from the border of Egypt to the river Euphrates, and from Dan to Beer-sheba;" and so numerous were the people, and their condition so completely happy, that, "Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry; and every man dwelt safely under his vine and under his fig-tree." To render this peace and prosperity permanent, Solomon contracted an alliance with Vaphres, king of Egypt, whose daughter he "married and brought into the city of David." This foreign alliance of the youthful king has often been, by different commentators, severely censured; but, as we find the act nowhere condemned in Scripture, we have a right to presume that, before Solomon espoused the Egyptian princess, she had abandoned the religion of her ancestors, and embraced the Israelitish faith.

In the midst of all this external prosperity, Solomon remained faithful in his attachment to the true faith, and to those solemn injunctions which his dying father had laid upon him—"He loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father, and sacrificed and burnt incense in high places." Of these "high places" Gibeon was the most remarkable; for there the Tabernacle and the brazen altar still remained, though the Ark of the Covenant had

been brought to Jerusalem. Thither the young king, attended by all the chief princes of the kingdom, now repaired, and there offered a solemn and magnificent sacrifice unto the Lord, of a "thousand burnt-offerings." With this expression of piety, the Almighty was so well pleased, that, during the following night, he appeared to Solomon in a vision or dream, and graciously promised to bestow upon him whatever he might most desire; saying unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." To this offer of Divine favor, Solomon at once replied, "Thou hast showed unto David thy great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee. And now, O Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant king, instead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen; a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great people?"

This petition of Solomon was so peculiarly acceptable to the Almighty, that God immediately answered him, saying, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies; neither yet hast asked long life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king; behold I have done according to thy words: I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy

father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." Having received this answer to his prayer, Solomon awoke from his dream or vision, and, returning to Jerusalem, he repaired to the Ark of the Covenant, and there offered up abundance of burnt-offerings to the Lord; soon after which, he entertained all his servants in a general feast.

The rejoicings of the feast had scarcely ceased, before Solomon's superhuman wisdom was severely tested. Two women, each of whom having an infant child, were dwelling together in the same house. The child of one of them having, through the neglect of its mother, died, the mother arose at midnight, and went and exchanged the dead body of her own child for the living child of her companion. The real mother of the living child soon after brought her complaint before the king, and at his hands claimed her son; whilst the mother of the other child persisted in denying that any exchange of the children had been made. As no evidence existed by which the controversy could be decided, Solomon perceived that the only way to determine the question was to appeal to the instinctive affection of a mother for her offspring. He, therefore, said unto one of his servants, "Bring a sword, and divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." This order was no sooner given, than the heart of the real mother answered to the appeal; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it;" whilst the other woman was quite willing that the child should be divided. This wise device of the king having thus entirely succeeded, he at once gave sentence in favor of the true mother, saying, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof." The settlement of this singular controversy presented so remarkable an instance of the king's great sagacity and wisdom, that the people thenceforth con-

sidered him as a prince entirely governed by Divine impulse.

The wisdom of Solomon, and the great propriety of his conduct in the administration of public affairs, soon spread a happy influence over the whole of his dominions, extending even to the remotest of his subjects. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the surrounding nations either paid their king tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms from the Nile to the Euphrates; embracing also, within his government, an entire range of provinces beyond the latter river; and the magnificence in which he lived far surpassed that of either of his own immediate predecessors, or any of his contemporary monarchs. Jerusalem, his capital, had also so nearly reached the height of its splendor, as to need only the erection of the contemplated Temple for Divine worship, to render it "the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

This famous city was built upon two hills, and compassed round about with mountains. The soil upon which it stood was barren and stony; but the country adjacent was well-watered, having the fountains of Gihon and Siloam, and the brook Kidron in its midst. Jebus, the ancient city, was seated on a hill towards the south; and the new city, or city of David, stood north of it, and was built upon one of the elevations of the Zion range of mountains. This city contained the royal palace, built with great magnificence by David, in the early part of his reign, and also Mount Moriah, upon which the Temple afterwards stood. Here, also, Solomon had already erected a new palace for his queen, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

Between the city of Jebus and the city of David, ex-

tended the valley of Millo, which for some time separated those two cities; but this space was afterwards filled up by David and Solomon, and thus the two cities became united into one. In the midst of this valley, or more properly in the city of David, bordering upon it, stood the house Millo, the design or use of which is no where mentioned. As the word itself is derived from a Hebrew root, which signifies *to be full*, the probability is that it was a large, capacious hall, designed for the senate house, or for some other public meetings. That it was a building of a public nature, is evident from the fact that when Solomon, in the fifteenth verse of the ninth chapter of the First Book of Kings, enumerates the objects for which a tax was to be levied upon his subjects, he assigns as his reason, "that he might build the House of the Lord, and his own house, and *Millo*, and the walls of Jerusalem.

The fountains which refreshed Jerusalem were Siloam and Gihon. The fountain of Siloam was on the east side of the city, near the brook Kidron, and rose immediately beneath the city walls. It was sometimes called, as in the Book of Joshua, in Samuel, and in Kings, the fountain of Enrogel, or the Fuller's fountain. Some travellers assert that the waters of this fountain are brackish and unpalatable; but the prophet Isaiah seems to convey a different idea when, in uttering the complaint against the Israelites, he says, "forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, which go softly." And Jerome expressly informs us that "the waters of the fountain of Siloam made the valley of gardens and plantations through which they ran, pleasant and delightful." The fountain of Gihon, which very probably sprang from an adjacent hill of the same name, was in the west side of Jerusalem; and the waters of both these fountains being, for the convenience of the inhabitants, conveyed through the various parts of the city, and

distributed into pools; to one of which allusion is made as "The Pool of Siloam."

The brook Kidron, another remarkable feature of the vicinity of Jerusalem, was also on the east side of the city, and ran through the valley of Jehoshaphat, between the city and Mount Olivet. This brook usually contained but a small quantity of water, and was sometimes quite dry; but in the time of sudden and copious rains, which were very common in that country, it swelled to a large stream, and ran with great impetuosity. On such occasions it was of important service to the city, as it then received the contents of the common sewers, and carried them into the Dead Sea.

The two principal mountains in the vicinity of Jerusalem were Mount Olivet, and Mount Calvary. Mount Olivet was situated east of the city, and was separated from it by the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the brook Kidron. It was distant about a Sabbath day's journey, or one mile from the city, and consisted of three different summits or peaks. On the south summit, Solomon, after he allowed himself to be corrupted by his strange wives, built temples to the gods of the Ammonites and the Moabites; and it was thence called the *Mount of Corruption.* The north, which was the highest summit, was commonly called the Mount of Galilee; but the central summit is more sacredly memorable than either of the others, because it was from thence that Christ, after his crucifixion, ascended into Heaven. Mount Calvary, which probably derives its name from its resemblance in form to a human skull, was situated west of Jerusalem, and just without the gates of the city. It was here that Christ was ignominiously crucified; and from this circumstance we may presume, that it was the ordinary place of execution of criminals of every description.

The principal vallies adjacent to Jerusalem, were the Valley of Jehoshaphat, before mentioned; the Valley of Hinnom; and the Valley of Shaveth, or the *King's Dale.* The Valley of Hinnom lay south of the city, and was only remarkable for the barbarous and cruel worship of Moloch, in which parents caused their children to "pass through fire, to that grim idol." This valley was also called Tophet, from the Hebrew word *Toph*, which, in signification, is equivalent to *timpanum* in Latin, or *timbrel* in English. Here, during the reign of idolatry, the sound of the timbrel was perpetually heard, that the shrieks of the children offered in sacrifice might be drowned; and in this place there was afterwards kept up a perpetual fire, to consume the offals and carcases of beasts brought thither from the sacrifices of the Temple; hence the Saviour, in allusion to this circumstance, uses Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, as a type of Hell. The Valley of Shaveth, or the *King's Dale*, was situated to the south-east of the city, and formed a remarkable contrast to the Valley of Hinnom. It was the place to which the king ordinarily resorted for exercise and recreation; and being immediately connected with the palace, it was made to abound in everything luxurious and beautiful. The King's Dale is also remarkable for being the place where Melchizedeck met the patriarch Abraham, in his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomar.

The walls of Jerusalem were of great strength, and upon them were placed numerous battlements for the defense of the city. These walls faced exactly east, west, north, and south; and the entrance through them into the city was by numerous gates, each of which received its designation according to the purpose to which it was appropriated, or to the place to which it was adjacent. *The Gate of the Valley*, on the east side of the city, opened

upon the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and the way from it led over the brook Kidron, to Mount Olivet. *The Water Gate*, on the same side, was the passage-way through which the aqueducts led from the fountains without the wall to the various parts of the city within. *The Gate of the Fountain* was south of the Water Gate, and received its name from its situation, which was near the fountain of Siloam. *The Gate of Ephraim* was on the north side of the city, and opened upon the road which led to that part of the country where the tribe of Ephraim dwelt. *The High Gate* was probably the principal gate of the city, and was situated in the vicinity of the royal palace and the Temple. Besides these gates, there were numerous others—such as the *Horse Gate*, the *Sheep Gate*, and the *Fish Gate*, all of which received their names from the various markets to which they led.

Jerusalem was, also, surrounded by vast and magnificent gardens, and in the various hillsides without the city were numerous subterraneous chambers used for sepulchral purposes. *The Sepulchres of the Kings* were, however, situated within the city of David, and were wonderfully grand. These sepulchres were cut into solid marble rock, and were, throughout, as exact in their forms and proportions as though they had been constructed of the most exquisite masonry. An entry from without led into a court about twenty-six feet square; and on the left side of this court was a portico, twenty-seven feet long and twelve broad, supported by rows of columns, all cut into the same solid mass of rock. From this portico a passage led into a large chamber, twenty-four feet square, beyond which there were six others, all constructed in a manner similar to those already described, excepting the two last, to enter which there was a descent of six steps. In each of these chambers but the first, stone coffins were placed

in niches; and there rested the remains of many of the kings of Judah, from the time of David till long after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

But all this grandeur and magnificence, and all these works of utility, sink into comparative insignificance, when compared with the Temple which Solomon, now in the fourth year of his reign, began to build. For the erection of this building, his father David, as we have already seen, had made the most ample provisions; and the young king, therefore, as soon as he had established his throne and settled the order of his government, prepared to carry the design of his father into execution. To facilitate this object, he entered into a treaty with Hiram, the son and successor of that king of Tyre from whom his father David, had received material aid in erecting his own royal palace. By this treaty, Solomon obtained the assistance of Hiram's subjects, in preparing the materials for the building; and as the Tyrians were the most skillful artisans then known, the direction of all the operations was readily yielded to them. To assist the Tyrians in obtaining the timber for the building from Mount Lebanon, Solomon appointed thirty thousand of his own subjects, ten thousand of whom were employed for this purpose during each successive month, until the whole work was completed. In addition to these, seventy thousand Canaanitish proselytes were employed to carry burthens, eighty thousand to cut stone out of the quarries, and three thousand six hundred as overseers. To finish the inner part of the Temple, and to construct the more delicate and costly vessels, Hiram sent Solomon a very skillful artist, of his own name, whose mother was of the tribe of Dan, but his father was a Tyrian. Under the direction of this extraordinary genius, all the curious furniture of the Temple, whether wrought in gold, or silver, or brass, or

iron, or whether made of linen, of tapestry, or of embroidery, were both designed and executed.

The spot upon which the Temple was built, was, as we have before observed, Mount Moriah; and the foundation, facing east, west, north, and south, and forming an exact square, was one thousand four hundred and sixty feet in length on each side. This foundation was, according to Josephus, "laid prodigiously deep, and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers, and be proof against the worm. Besides this, they were so morticed into one another, and so wedged into the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis were not less admirable than the intended superstructure, the one being in every respect adapted to the other." This foundation was carried up the sides of the mountain to the height of six hundred and eight feet, and was surmounted by a wall on each side eleven feet high, and of equal thickness. From the top of this wall, the view of the city to the westward was grand and imposing in the extreme.

The base of the Temple was square, and was eleven hundred feet in length on each side. Between the outer wall and the Temple were a number of buildings, appropriated to various purposes; and these were surrounded with porticos, supported by marble columns forty feet high. At the entrance of the Temple was the first court, or the *Court of the Gentiles.* This court was ninety-one feet wide, and elegantly paved with marble in mosaic; it was also, like the adjacent building, surrounded with porticos, supported by magnificent marble columns, and was exclusively appropriated to the use of the Gentile converts. The court corresponding to this in Herod's Temple, was the part of the building which the Jews, by making it a place of traffic, profaned, and whence Christ indignantly drove the money-changers.

The second court of the Temple was the *Court of the Israelites.* This court was separated from the Court of the Gentiles by a square wall, two hundred and thirty feet in length in each direction, and was entered by four different gates, one on each side, from each of which a flight of seven steps ascended to a variegated marble pavement, far more rich and beautiful than the pavement of the Court of the Gentiles. The Court of the Israelites was one hundred and sixty-six feet square; and for the accommodation of male and female worshippers, it was divided into two parts, by a low wall passing through the centre. Here a magnificent throne, which the king ascended when he visited the Temple, was placed; and it was in this court, the common place of daily offerings, that the touching incident of the widow's mite occurred.

The third court of the Temple was the *Court of the Priests.* This court was also one hundred and sixty feet square, and was surrounded by a wall, through which there were entrances or gateways, on the north, south, and east sides only. The ascent to this court from the Court of the Israelites, was by a flight of eight steps; and the court itself was surrounded on every side by cloisters, and apartments for the accommodation of those priests who were in immediate attendance upon the service of the Temple. This court could be entered by the priests only, and in it was placed the Altar of Burnt-offerings, containing ten brazen lavers, each standing upon a base over seven feet square, and five and a half feet high. In these lavers were cleansed the victims offered in sacrifice; and on the borders of their bases were carved images of lions, oxen, and cherubim, which were all master-pieces of art. Here, also, stood the *Molten Sea*—an immense brazen laver, nine and a half feet high, and nineteen feet in diameter, and used only for the cleansing of the priests. This sea con-

tained two thousand baths, and was supported by twelve brazen oxen, three facing in each direction, east, west, north, and south. "It was an hand-breadth thick, and the brim was wrought with flowers of lilies: and below the brim, it was enriched with varied devices."

On the west side of the Altar of Burnt-offerings was an ascent of twelve steps that led to the *Temple proper*, which consisted of three parts, the *Porch*, the *Sanctuary*, and the *Holy of Holies*. The Porch was twenty-two feet long, and thirty-six and a half feet broad; and at its entrance stood the two famous pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which signified that *God alone was the support of the Temple*. In this apartment were suspended votive offerings, and the entrance to it was twenty-five and a half feet wide. The Sanctuary of the Temple was sixty-six and a half feet long, and thirty-six and a half feet broad, and was separated from the Porch by a party-colored Babylonish veil, mysteriously denoting the universe. The Sanctuary was the ordinary place of sacrifice, and contained the *Altar of Incense*, the *Table of Shew-Bread*, and the five *Golden Candlesticks*.

The Holy of Holies was exactly thirty-six and a half feet square, and was separated from the Sanctuary by a rich double veil. It was lined throughout with gold, and contained in its centre the *Ark of the Covenant*, in which were placed the two tables of stone upon which God himself had inscribed the Ten Commandments. Apparently to guard this precious treasure, two cherubim, made of olive-wood and covered with gold, were placed, one on either side, the height of each of which was nearly twenty feet, and with wings so expanded, that whilst the outer wings touched the side walls of the apartment, the inner met directly over the centre of the Ark. The Ark itself was three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide, and three feet

three inches high. It was made of wood and overlaid with gold, excepting the Mercy Seat, which consisted of a solid golden slab. Upon the centre of the Mercy Seat were placed two small cherubim, between the wings of which rested the *Shechinah, or Cloud of the Divine Presence;* and hence the beautiful expression of the prophet, "Jehovah dwelt beneath the Cherubim." No other light was admitted into the Holy of Holies than that which emanated from the fire originally kindled from Heaven, and which burned perpetually upon the sacred altar; and here no step ever intruded save that of the high-priest alone, and he even was permitted to enter the hallowed place but once a year.

The foundation of the Temple was laid in the month of March, 1012 A. C., and the whole work was completed in October, 1005 A. C., having occupied, in the building, just seven and a half years. The cost of the materials and the work was, according to Josephus, sixty millions of pounds sterling; but, according to Arbuthnot's table of the valuation of ancient coins and currencies, to the unprecedented sum of six hundred millions. The walls of the Temple were of white marble, and the blocks of which they were composed were so skillfully joined together that no seam was visible. The beams, the posts, the doors, and all the other wood-work, were of cedar, olive, and fir, and were coated with gold, and fastened with golden nails. The roof was of olive-wood, and was covered with massive sheets of gold, polished with such brilliancy that when the rays of the sun rested upon it, the natural eye could not bear the sight

The various vessels and other furniture required for the service of the Temple were almost incredibly numerous. Of these vessels, one hundred and forty thousand were made of gold, and one hundred and thirty-four thousand of sil-

ver. Besides these, there were ten thousand vestments of silk with purple girdles for the priests, two millions of purple vestments for the singers, two hundred thousand trumpets, and forty thousand other musical instruments.

All the vast work of the Temple, from the smallest block of marble to the magnificent brazen basin, was wrought at a distance from the spot where the building was erected; and when they were brought together so perfectly were they adapted to each other, that not even the sound of a hammer was heard in putting each in its appropriate place. "The whole frame," says Josephus, "was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discovered, no sign of any working-tools being upon them; but the whole looked more like the work of Providence and Nature, than the production of art and human invention. As for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen could do—of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the Temple was overlaid with beaten gold; and every part, even to the posts of the doors, was gold upon gold. In a word, the Temple was gold all over, and nothing was wanting, either within or without, that could contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work."

SECTION VIII.

SOLOMON:—The Dedication of the Temple to Divine Service—Solomon's Solemn and Impressive Prayer on the Occasion—His Blessing upon the People—His new Palaces—Celebrity of his Wealth and Wisdom—Visit of the Queen of Sheba to his Court—Effect of Solomon's Splendor and Magnificence upon her—Solomon led into Idolatry by strange Wives—Its Consequences—His Repentance and Reformation—His Death and Character.

THE Temple being finished, Solomon, in order to celebrate the dedication of it to the Almighty with the greater

magnificence, postponed the ceremony of dedication until the following year, which was to be a year of jubilee, and during which vast numbers of the people, from all parts of the kingdom, repaired to Jerusalem. To insure the attendance of the most eminent of his subjects on this august occasion, he sent messengers to all the elders of Israel, to the princes of the different tribes, and to the head of each family, directing them to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed, which immediately preceded the *Feast of Tabernacles.*

This great feast lasted eight days, and was instituted and regularly observed, in order to preserve the remembrance of the dwelling of the Israelites in temporary Tabernacles during their sojourn in the wilderness. Throughout the whole of the celebration, the people dwelt in the open air in tents, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in the form of bowers; and the time was passed in offering public sacrifices and singing in their synagogues their hosannas. During these exercises the people carried in their hands branches of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles, and willows, tied together with gold or silver threads, or with ribbons. But of all the ceremonies attending this feast, the *libation*, or *pouring out of water*, was the most remarkable. The water used for this purpose was drawn by a priest from the pool of Siloam, and after being mixed with wine, was, at the time of the morning service, poured upon the altar, the people, meantime, singing with joyful exultation, *With joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation.* The whole of this festival was designed to commemorate the favor of the Almighty to his people while they dwelt in tents in the wilderness, and to remind them of their short and pilgrim state here on earth.

The Feast of Tabernacles having closed, and all things being now in readiness, the ceremony of dedication

commenced on the eighth day of the seventh month, which corresponds with the latter part of October. The ceremony opened with a grand and solemn procession, in the midst of which the priests carried the Ark to the Temple, and placed it in the centre of the *Holy of Holies*, between the two golden cherubim, by whose overshadowing wings the sacred vessel was apparently screened. The king himself, accompanied by all his chief officers, and all the elders of Israel, marched before the Ark, and were followed by a large number of priests and Levites, singing appropriate canticles, and playing upon numerous instruments. The Ark was followed by another band of singers and players, accompanied by other priests bearing the golden candlesticks, the Altar of Incense, and other sacred utensils of the sanctuary; and the whole procession closed with a select band bearing that Tabernacle of the Congregation which Moses had caused to be built in the wilderness, and which was now to be deposited in the treasury of the Temple. As the procession passed in, the priests offered a vast number of sacrifices; and while those who bore the Ark of the Covenant were placing it in the Holy of Holies, the air rang with the sound of trumpets and the voices of the Levites, singing, with rapturous delight, successive stanzas, the burthen of which was, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever."

The priests had no sooner placed the Ark in the Holy of Holies, than the whole Temple was filled with a miraculous cloud, "so that they could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." When Solomon beheld this wonderful appearance, he was assured that the Almighty had accepted his offering of a dwelling-place; and he, therefore, prostrated himself upon the ground in the Divine presence,

and, after continuing for some time in this situation, he arose, and turning towards the sanctuary, and raising his hands and his eyes to heaven, he poured forth the grateful overflowings of his heart in the following devout strain:—

"O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: who hast kept with thy servant David, my father, that thou promised him: thou spokest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David, my father.

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day; that thine eyes may be opened towards this house, night and day, even the place of which thou hast said, My Name shall be there; that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place; and hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and when thou hearest forgive.

"If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come

before thine Altar in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head, and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy Name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee, if they pray towards this place, and confess thy Name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

"If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if the enemy besiege them in the land of their cities, whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be—what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house; then hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men—that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country, for thy Name's sake; for they shall hear of thy great Name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy

stretched-out arm, when he shall come and pray towards this house. Hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy Name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have builded is called by thy Name.

"If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord towards the city which thou hast chosen, and towards the house which I have builded for thy Name; then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives, unto the land of the enemy, far or near, yet they shall bethink themselves, in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee towards their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have builded for thy Name; then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron; that

thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

Solomon, having closed this solemn prayer and supplication to the Almighty, arose from his kneeling posture, and turning to the people, blessed all the congregation of Israel, saying, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised by the mouth of Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel, at all times, as the matter shall require; that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else. Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, as at this day."

The prayer of dedication, and the address to the people, being ended, Solomon concluded the solemn and impressive ceremonies of the occasion by a sacrifice, surpassing, in magnificence, anything of the kind that had preceded it. He then, "on the eighth day, or the day after the feast, sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of

heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and Israel his people." The great work being thus happily accomplished, and visibly accepted by the Almighty, and the Ark of the Covenant, with its glorious Shechinah, having thus found its last resting-place, in Jerusalem was God thenceforth to be known, and there alone could sacrifices and offerings, with an assurance of acceptance, be offered unto him.

During the night which followed these solemn and joyful ceremonies, God again appeared to Solomon, either by vision or dream, and said unto him, "I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom forever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people: and at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done this unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other

gods, and have worshipped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil"—a threatening which we shall soon see, in the sequel of their history, awfully fulfilled.

At the time of the dedication of the Temple, Solomon was in the thirtieth year of his age; and, during the following thirteen years, he was chiefly employed in the erection of other works of ornament or utility. Amongst these was a splendid palace for himself, on a peak of the Zion range of mountains, opposite to Mount Moriah, upon which the Temple stood; another palace for his queen, the daughter of the king of Egypt; and the "House of the Forest of Lebanon," which was his principal residence during the summer. These palaces were all built of costly stones of immense size, and were surrounded by large porches, or colonnades. "In the porch of judgment, at the royal palace, was the great throne of ivory, overlaid with pure gold. The ascent to the throne was by six steps, and on each side were stays, and two lions stood beside the stays; and upon six steps were twelve lions." The palace of Lebanon contained "two hundred targets of beaten gold, of six hundred shekels each; and three hundred golden shields, of three pounds to each shield. "All the vessels of this house, and all Solomon's vessels, were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was nothing thought of in the days of this king."

In the erection of these splendid buildings, Solomon was greatly aided by his faithful ally, the king of Tyre; and, as an expression of his gratitude, he bestowed upon that prince twelve cities in the land of Galilee, adjacent to his own country. For some reason, however, not now known, these cities were soon after re-ceded to Solomon, and by him fortified with great strength. He also fortified, at the same time, the city of Gazer, which he had

received as a dowery with his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh; Hanath, which he had recently captured; Tadmor, in the wilderness of Syria; "and all the cities of store, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and all that which Solomon desired to build in the land of his dominions." He also rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and strengthened its fortifications, to correspond with the increased magnificence and importance of the place.

The laboring men who were employed on the building of these great works, were a remnant of the Canaanites who dwelt in the vicinity of Mount Lebanon. They were a stubborn race, and had hitherto successfully resisted the authority of the Israelites; but being at length subdued by Solomon, he used them as bondsmen in the more laborious and menial parts of his service, whilst all the stations of honor and trust in his government were filled by native Israelites. "They were his officers, his men of war, the rulers of his chariots and horsemen, and rulers over those that wrought in the work."

The execution of these vast designs required an amount of wealth far exceeding the utmost resources of Solomon's kingdom; and, therefore, in order to supply the deficiency, both he and his subjects now, for the first time, engaged in foreign commerce. Aided by his old and steadfast friend and ally, Hiram, king of Tyre, he fitted out a fleet in Ezion-Geber, beside Elath, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom; "and manning it with a crew composed of both Hebrews and Tyrians, it sailed to Ophir; and, after two years' absence, brought thence to the king four hundred and twenty talents in gold, besides vast quantities of eastern merchandise. This merchandise was transferred to another fleet of ships, and disposed of all along the shores of the Mediterranean; and thus the

land of Israel became at once the centre of a most lucrative trade. Solomon's subjects, at the same time, carried on an inland trade from Egypt, through his dominions, extending to Tadmor, in the Syrian desert, and thence farther eastward; and in the course of this new enterprise, linen yarn, horses, and chariots were brought from Egypt, and sold to the Syrians; and Solomon's servants had a complete monopoly of the whole trade."

Through these different enterprises, the wealth and wisdom of Solomon, and the splendor of his court, became so generally known, as to elicit the admiration of all the surrounding monarchs; "and all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart. And they brought every man his present; vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, and garments, and armor, and spices, and harness, and mules, a rate year by year."

Among others who were thus attracted to the king of Israel, was the queen of Sheba, whose dominions lay in the southern part of Arabia. No sooner had the report of Solomon's wisdom reached her, than she came with a large retinue, and a present of gold and spices, and precious stones, to test the extent of the king's reputed wisdom, by proposing the most difficult and abstruse questions. The manner in which Solomon answered all the queen's questions, together with the splendor of his court, and the grandeur of the Temple service, were so completely overwhelming that there was no more spirit in her. "And she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that

hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice."

Solomon must, at this period, have passed the forty-fifth year of his age; and, up to this time, he seems to have strictly followed the precepts of his father, and "observed all the statutes and commandments of the Almighty." His unprecedented prosperity, however, at length corrupted his heart; and giving loose to his unbridled passions, they soon swept away, like a whirlwind, every pious and virtuous barrier by which he had hitherto been surrounded. He soon drained the cup of earthly joys to its very dregs—indulging his sensual passions until the counsels of sobriety and reason lost all their influence over him. He even, in direct violation of the laws of Moses, married many of the daughters of the surrounding idolatrous nations; thus multiplying the number of his wives until they amounted to seven hundred princesses, and three hundred concubines. By their influence, these strange women led him into acts of the grossest idolatry; "for Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. And likewise did he for all his strange wives which sacrificed unto their gods."

This extraordinary infatuation of the king, and the abandoned wickedness which attended it, at length so greatly offended the Almighty, "that the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I com-

manded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it unto thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen."

This awful warning had, happily, the desired effect upon the guilty king, and soon brought him to sincere repentance and a thorough reformation of life. It was now, however, too late to avert the threatened calamity: the clouds of adversity were already rapidly gathering around this recently happy and peaceful empire; and the lowering storm but too clearly indicated that mere pomp and outward show are far from constituting real happiness. Solomon had, by the most melancholy experience, thoroughly learned that of the most exquisite earthly joys, "all was vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit;" and in order, therefore, to warn Rehoboam, his son and prospective successor, of the fatal error which he himself had committed, he left him, in *Ecclesiastes*, the impressive record of his own sad experience; and afterwards composed, for his more immediate instruction, the inimitable *Book of Proverbs*.

In the execution of his righteous judgments against the empire of Israel, the first enemy which the Almighty raised up was Hadad, a prince of the royal family of Edom. From the general slaughter of the Edomites by Joab, Hadad, then a child, had escaped; and, after wandering for many years from place to place, he finally reached Egypt, and there so rapidly advanced in the king's favor, that he soon married into the royal family. He remained quietly in Egypt until after the death of David and Joab; but at length, with the permission of

the Egyptian monarch, he returned to his own country and began "a petty warfare, which Solomon did not repress." While Hadad was carrying on these operations in the southwestern part of Solomon's dominions, another adversary appeared in the north, in the person of Rezon, king of Damascus. This spirited prince had openly revolted from Hadadezer, king of Zobah, and, with a band of resolute followers, he made himself master of Damascus, where, in the latter part of Solomon's reign, his power became very formidable.

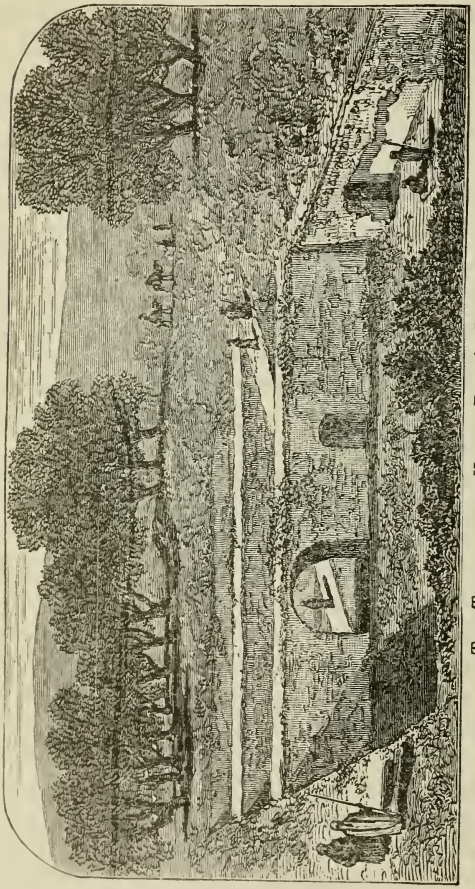
But Solomon's most serious enemy, at this time, was raised up amidst his own people, and found in the person of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite. This young prince had already so greatly distinguished himself by his valor, that the king, observing his rare qualities, had "made him ruler over the House of Joseph." As ruler of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Jeroboam soon acquired great popularity; and it therefore required little farther effort on his part to wean the northern tribes, amidst which he dwelt, and who were now overburthened with the weight of their taxes, to revolt from the house of Solomon.

In order to prepare the mind of Jeroboam for his future elevation, God ordered the prophet Ahijah to meet him alone on his return from Jerusalem, and communicate to him a knowledge of his future destiny. The prophet accordingly went forth to execute his important commission; and, meeting Jeroboam in the way, he first tore off his garment, and then rending it into twelve pieces, communicated his message in the following energetic manner: "Take thou ten pieces; for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. Because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped other gods,

and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my judgments. Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hands: he shall have one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem; and I will make him prince, all the days of his life. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hands and will give it to thee, even the ten tribes; and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will afflict the seed of David, but not forever." This act of Ahijah soon became known to the king; and Jeroboam's life being no longer safe in his own country, he fled to the court of Egypt, and there remained until after Solomon's death.

In 975 A. C., and in the fifty-ninth year of his age, Solomon, after a reign of forty years, slept with his fathers, and was peacefully buried in the city of David. Happy for him that his death occurred before the gathering and threatening storm, that now menaced his dominions on every side, burst forth upon his beloved country! A united and devoted people had welcomed him to his throne, and his long reign had been one of almost unalloyed prosperity. His wisdom was proverbial; but his love of pomp and display, his voluptuous habits, and, above all, his sinful departure from the true God, brought misery upon his hitherto happy people, covered his own name with reproaches, and left, probably, few to mourn his death. Still, however, in estimating his life and character, charity requires that we remember his virtues as

well as his vices—his wisdom, his generosity, and his early zeal for the worship of God, as well as his devotion to the world, and his shameful idolatry.



THE TOMB OF THE KINGS—DAVID'S SEPULCHRE.
(*From Lyman Abbott's Commentary.*)

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

KINGS OF ISRAEL.

SECTION I.

JEROBOAM:—Erects Altars at Bethel and at Dan for the Worship of a Golden Calf—Officiates himself as High-priest—NADAB—BAASHA—Follows the Wicked Counsels of Jeroboam—ELAH—OMRI—Building of Samaria—AHAB—Marries Jezebel—Elijah the Prophet—The Wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel—The Drought—Retirement of Elijah—Challenge to the Prophets of Baal—Israel invaded by Benhadad—The Field of Naboth—Death of Ahab.

WITH the death of Solomon, the glory of the kingdom of Israel departed. That great prince, in order to support the vast expenses of his luxurious government, had been compelled, during the latter part of his reign, to impose upon his subjects a weight of taxation which nothing but his own personal authority could have induced them to bear. When Rehoboam, his son and successor, therefore, repaired, on his father's death, to Shechem, to receive the homage of all Israel, and their confirmation of his right to the crown, the princes of ten of the tribes, with Jeroboam—who had now returned from Egypt—at their head, waited upon the king, and firmly required, as the condition of their submission to his government, a reduction of their taxes. "Thy father," said they, "made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, make thou the service of thy father and the yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

REHOBOAM was, at this time, in the forty-first year of

his age; and his own knowledge and observation should, therefore, have led him to perceive that the request of Jeroboam and his associates was both reasonable and just, and should be at once complied with. God had, however, determined to punish the house of David for the sin of Solomon, by separating the ten tribes from the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, and bestowing the government of them upon another; and he, therefore, permitted Rehoboam, in this emergency, to hearken to the advice of evil counsellors. Rehoboam seemed, at first, inclined to listen to the request of his subjects; and he, accordingly, directed them to appear before him again at the expiration of three days, informing them that he would then reply to their petition.

In the mean time, the king called together a council of the experienced statesmen, who had long been associated with his father in the government; and no sooner had the complaint of the people been communicated to them, than they advised Rehoboam to treat the request kindly, "and speak good words unto them." The younger counsellors of the king, who had grown up with him, advised him, on the contrary, to reduce the disaffected to submission by threats of increased severity; and, therefore, at the expiration of the three days, Rehoboam answered the people, through their representatives, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The rebellion was entirely successful; the ten tribes, with the tribe of Ephraim at their head, immediately proclaimed Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king; and thus, in 975 A. C., founded the kingdom of Israel, in opposition to the kingdom of Judah.

Jeroboam was no sooner crowned king of Israel, than he selected the ancient city of Shechem, in the tribe of

Ephraim, to which he himself belonged, as the seat of his government: he had also a summer residence at Tirzah, in Manasseh. But, though thus released from its dependance upon Judah, yet the new kingdom was still under undiminished allegiance to the Almighty, and was equally bound with Judah by all the obligations of the ancient covenants. In both kingdoms we are, therefore, still to observe the continued operation of the theocratical system for the preservation of the knowledge of the true God upon the earth. Both were prospered or humbled, in proportion as their conduct advanced or retarded that great object; and as we henceforth follow their separate career, we shall have frequent occasion to observe how distinctly the scrutinizing eye of Omniscience recognizes all their doings.

Jeroboam, whatever may have been his original intentions, prepared, soon after his elevation to the throne, to separate his kingdom entirely from the kingdom of Judah; and, as the unity of the national worship, and the custom of repairing three times a year to Jerusalem, greatly impeded his plan, he impiously resolved to establish idolatrous sanctuaries in his own kingdom. With this view, he selected Bethel, in the south part of his dominions, and Dan, in the north; and at each of these places he erected an altar, and placed upon it, after the manner of the Egyptians, a golden calf, as a symbol under which he designed that his subjects should worship the Almighty. After thus preparing his altars, Jeroboam ordered the tribes in their respective vicinity to repair to each, and, addressing himself to the people in the form of an apology for what he had done, said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

The selection of Bethel and Dan as the seats of idola-

trous worship, was not the result of caprice—the former having long been venerated as the place where Jacob, the father of the Hebrew race, had his miraculous vision; and the latter had been notorious for its idolatry, even from the early settlement of the Israelites in Canaan.

After having established his altars, Jeroboam had a new difficulty to contend with, which he seems not to have anticipated. No priest or Levite could be found, willing to connect himself with this abomination; but all, with one accord, abandoned their cities and possessions, and removed into Judah. In this emergency, Jeroboam was compelled to select priests for his new deities from the lowest ranks of the people, and to assume the office of high-priest himself. These innovations were so shocking to every mind properly imbued with the principles of the true religion, that a large proportion of the most valuable men in Israel soon after removed into the sister kingdom. By this means, the kingdom of Judah became, in a short time, in real strength and power, less unequal to that of Israel, than the proportion between two and ten tribes would seem to indicate. Judah was, in reality, a *settled* kingdom, with well organized resources and establishments, and with a large treasure; so that the balance of power may even now be deemed to incline in its favor.

On one occasion, as Jeroboam was officiating as high-priest at Bethel, at *his* feast of tabernacles, the prophet Ahijah was sent by the Almighty to inform him that Josiah, a future king of Judah, should profane and destroy the very altar at which he was then burning incense. The power by which the prophet spoke, was evinced by the instant withering of the hand which the king stretched forth to seize him; and also by its immediate restoration to health at the prophet's prayer. This solemn event had, however, no abiding effect upon Jeroboam; for he still

persisted in his evil ways until he at length brought ruin upon his house and family. This doom was announced by the prophet Ahijah, who, in predicting the event, declared that not only the dynasty of Jeroboam should soon be extinguished, but that the sins of the Israelites, as a nation, should, in the end, cause them to be carried away as captives beyond the Euphrates. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years, during the greater part of which a desultory warfare was maintained between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel; but, in the nineteenth year, Jeroboam received so severe a defeat from Abijah, that he never again displayed his former spirit of enterprise. His death occurred 953 A. C.

Jeroboam was succeeded, both in his kingdom and in his idolatrous courses, by his son Nadab. This prince, after an unimportant reign of two years, was assassinated by Baasha, one of his generals, who also put all the remaining members of Jeroboam's family to death—thus fulfilling the first part of Ahijah's prediction.

Baasha adopted the wicked policy of Jeroboam; and though the prophets of the Lord forewarned him that similar vengeance would overtake his family, still he obstinately persevered in his impiety. The immediate consequence of this conduct on the part of the king was, that many of the Israelites, who were strongly attached to the pure worship of their fathers, annually went up secretly to offer their devotions at Jerusalem, while others took up their permanent abode in Judah. To prevent these courses, Baasha took and fortified Ramah; but from this stronghold he was soon called away to defend his country from the Syrians, whom Asa, king of Judah had bribed to invade the territories of his rival. Baasha died after a feeble and inglorious reign of twenty-three years, 930 A. C.

Baasha was succeeded by his son Elah, a weak and luxurious prince, who occupied the throne but little more than a year. He was assassinated while feasting at the house of his steward, by Zimri, the captain of his chariots; and as soon as the army, which was then besieging Gibbethon, a Philistine city, heard of the murder, they raised Omri, their commander, to the vacant throne, and marched against the usurper. Zimri, who was then at Tirzah, soon perceiving that there were no hopes of escape, fled into his palace, and setting it on fire, perished in the flames. Omri, however, found another competitor for the throne in Tibni, whom the people had, meantime, chosen king; and it was not until 923 A. C., after a severe contest of six years, that he subdued this formidable rival.

The most important act of the reign of Omri, was the building of a new capitol, which he called Samaria, after Shemer, the name of the original proprietor of the hill on which it was erected. Samaria soon became a place of great importance, and continued, long after the fall of the kingdom of Israel, to be the metropolis of the country in the centre of which it was situated. The sacred historian sums up the character of this prince by saying, "Omri wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, and did worse than all that went before him." He died 918 A. C., after a reign of eleven years, and was succeeded by his son Ahab.

Ahab, immediately after the commencement of his reign, married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon; and, at her instigation, he introduced the worship of the Sidonian deities, which consisted of the offering of numerous sacrifices, and other enormities too abominable to be mentioned. Those who still adhered to the worship of the Almighty were bitterly persecuted, the schools of the prophets were closed, and many of the teachers put to death.

To stem the tide of corruption, and to prevent the tota. apostasy of Israel, God raised up Elijah the Tishbite, by far the greatest prophet, both in word and deed, that had appeared since Moses. He presented himself abruptly in the presence of the king, and announced to him in person the national punishment of a long drought, as an expression of Divine vengeance against such gross iniquity. In the eighth year of the reign of Ahab, the drought, in accordance with the prophet's announcement, commenced: and Elijah, at the Divine command, retired beyond the Jordan, and concealed himself in a cavern beside the brook Cherith, where he was, for a whole year, morning and evening, providentially provided with food by ravens. The drought continued; and the brook, for want of rain, being dried up, the prophet crossed the country to Sarepta, a town in the kingdom of Jezebel's father. At this place he remained two years, lodging with a poor widow and her son; and during all that time of famine, they were supported through the miraculous inexhaustion of a handful of flour and a little oil—the only remaining food of the poor woman when the prophet arrived at her humble dwelling.

During the three years that Elijah remained in obscurity, the Israelites suffered dreadfully from the famine; and Ahab, being convinced that the remedy was in the hands of the prophet, sought for him diligently in every direction. At length God, regarding the punishment as sufficient, resolved to give rain and remove the famine: he, therefore, ordered Elijah to return to the land of Israel. On his way thither he met Obadiah, a pious man and officer of the king's household, who had been sent out to seek forage for the cattle. Elijah, after a brief interview with Obadiah, bade him return and inform Ahab of his reappearance in Israel. The intelligence greatly delighted

the king, who immediately went out to meet the prophet; but he no sooner beheld him, than he exclaimed, "Art thou he who troubleth Israel?"

The implied charge in this question Elijah sternly retorted upon the king—alleging that it was his own apostasy and the apostasy of the nation that was the cause of their suffering. He, at the same time, required of Ahab that he should convene a general assembly of the priests of Baal, on Mount Carmel, where he alone would meet them, and would there determine, in the presence of all the people, which deity, Baal or Jehovah, was the most powerful protector of the nation. The challenge was accepted; the assembly called, and the altars erected. The priests of Baal spread forth their sacrifices, and continued, with frantic invocations and lacerations of their flesh, to call for a sign from heaven, until more than half the day was spent; but no sign, either in heaven or on earth, answered to their cry. Then Elijah arose, and placing himself by the side of *his* altar, he, after uttering some biting ridicule of the impotent god and his votaries, called solemnly upon the God of Israel to manifest his power. He was instantly answered by fire from heaven so intense, that it consumed not only the victims and the altar, but the very stones and dust that surrounded them. At this miraculous display of Divine power, the people fell on their faces, crying, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God;" and then, at the instance of the prophet, they evinced the sincerity of their conviction, by seizing the priests of Baal, and putting them all to death.

At the close of this impressive scene, Elijah ascended to the top of Mount Carmel and earnestly prayed that the drought might cease. A small cloud rising from the sea was immediately afterwards seen; and that welcome sign was soon followed by copious and abundant rain.

This miraculous deliverance of the people from their distress, had, however, no effect upon the mind of the wicked Jezebel; for, so greatly was she enraged at the slaughter of the priests of Baal, that she at once vowed the prophet's death. To avoid the effects of her anger, Elijah withdrew to Beersheba; and, leaving his servant at that place, he proceeded alone across the desert to Horeb, "the Mount of God." Here, where the law had been originally delivered, the Almighty manifested himself to his servant—not in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire; but in "a still small voice," which spoke comfort to his desolate heart, by assuring him that, though he deemed himself the only worshipper of God left in Israel, there were yet "seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal." He was then directed to return to his own country, and announce to Hazael that he should be king of Syria, to Jehu, that he should be king of Israel, and to Elisha that he should be his successor in the prophetic office.

In the eighteenth year of Ahab's reign, Benhadad, king of Syria, accompanied by thirty-two tributary princes, and a numerous army, invaded his kingdom, and laid siege to Samaria. Unworthy of Divine protection as the wicked Ahab was, yet the Almighty, for the glory of his own great name, sent a prophet to encourage him to march out against this vast host without fear. Ahab followed the directions of the unknown messenger; and, with a handful of men, encountering the Syrians, soon gained a signal victory over them. Mortified at this defeat Benhadad, in the following year, attempted, by a fresh invasion with an immense army, to retrieve what he had lost; but the motive which prompted to the second invasion was so dishonorable to the God of Israel, that the Almighty allowed Ahab again to triumph. But instead of availing himself of the advantages which this second victory afforded

him, for destroying the Syrian power, Ahab now entered into an alliance with Benhadad, and thus greatly offended his Divine protector, and brought lasting evils upon his own house.

Soon after this second triumph of Ahab over Benhadad, a new and most atrocious crime provoked the wrath of the Almighty against the king of Israel, and his whole family. Ahab, in order to increase his garden, was anxious to obtain a vineyard which belonged to Naboth, a native of Jezreel; but as the vineyard was a family inheritance, Naboth was not willing to part with it. The purpose of the wicked king was not, however, to be thwarted, and the still more wicked Jezebel, therefore, soon contrived that the innocent man, under the false charge of blasphemy, should be stoned to death, and the obstacle to their gaining possession of the vineyard thus violently removed. But Ahab had scarcely taken possession of the vineyard, before the prophet Elijah appeared and denounced upon the guilty king the most fearful vengeance for this new crime. "Thus saith the Lord," said he; "in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord, therefore the Lord will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy prosperity, and make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. And Jezebel, also, shall the dogs eat by the wall of Jezreel." On hearing this dreadful denunciation Ahab humbled himself, and apparently repented; in consequence of which, the heaviest part of this doom was deferred to the time of his successor. Ahab was soon after slain in an expedition against the Syrians, in 897 A. C., and in the twenty-second year of his reign.

SECTION II.

AHAZIAH:—His Idolatry and Death—JEHORAM—The Translation of Elijah—Elisha succeeds him—The Miracle of the Jordan—JEHU—Death of Jezebel, and Extirpation of the Family of AHAB—JEHORAM—JOASH—Death of Elisha—JEROBOAM the Second—War with the Syrians—Interregnum—ZECHARIAH—SHALLUM—MENAHEM—Increase of Idolatry—PEKAHIAH—PEKAH—HOSHEA—End of the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

AHAZIAH, the son and successor of Ahab, adhered to all the abominable idolatry which his father had practiced. In the second year of his reign, he was severely injured by a fall from an upper window of his palace; and fears being entertained for his life, he sent messengers to consult the oracle of Baal-Zebub, the fly-god of Ekron, respecting his recovery. On their way the messengers were met by Elijah, who predicted the approaching death of the king, as a punishment for designing to consult false gods. Ahaziah sent two detachments of fifty men each to arrest the prophet; but both companies were consumed by fire from heaven. A third captain of fifty prevailed upon Elijah to accompany him into the king's presence; but the prophet no sooner appeared before Ahaziah, than he informed him that, for impiously forsaking the God of Israel, and consulting false gods, he should rise no more from the bed on which he had lain down. Ahaziah accordingly died, after a reign of two years, 895 A. C.

AHAZIAH having no son, was succeeded by his brother JEHORAM. This prince was less prone to idolatry than his father and brother had been; and he, therefore, prohibited the worship of the Sidonian Baal, though, from political considerations, he retained the golden calves which Jeroboam had set up at Dan and Bethel. The first year of his reign was distinguished by one of the most extraordinary events in the history of our race—the transla-

tion to heaven of the prophet Elijah, who was taken thither from earth by a whirlwind, in a chariot and horses of fire Elisha was present to witness the supernatural scene; and on him the mantle and the power of Elijah devolved. This was soon made evident; for the Jordan, when smitten by the prophetic mantle, opened to allow him to pass through; at his word, the bitter waters of Jericho were made sweet; and his malediction brought bears from the woods to destroy a company of young men who insulted him, and mocked at the translation of Elijah. By these indications of superhuman power, Elisha at once became known to all Israel as the Divinely chosen successor of Elijah; and, dwelling in Samaria, he there, in his prophetic capacity, wrought several signal miracles, which gave him great influence with the people.

Benhadad, the Syrian monarch, still continued his inroads upon the kingdom of Israel; and as he had been defeated in several successive actions, he attributed his ill success to the influence of Elisha. He therefore sent a party of his soldiers to take him prisoner; but the Syrian troops were smitten, while on their way, with blindness, and in this helpless condition easily taken captive. Little daunted by these reverses, the Syrian king now assembled a large army, advanced against Samaria, blockaded the city, and reduced the inhabitants to the greatest extremities of famine —to such extremities, that women were even compelled to eat the flesh of their own children. When Jehoram heard of this, he rent his robes with horror; and as he supposed Elisha had the power to avert these evils, he swore that he should be put to death that very day. Aware of the king's intention, the prophet refused to admit his messenger into his house; but when Jehoram himself soon after followed, Elisha announced to him an immediate deliverance, and a superabundance of provisions in Samaria on the following

day. This announcement seemed, under the circumstances, incredible; but during the night following, the Syrians raised the siege and fled away in great alarm, leaving everything behind them. They had been miraculously made to hear the noise of a vast host of chariots and horses, which led them to conclude that the Israelites had obtained relief from the neighboring states; and hence their panic, and its consequences. The rich plunder of the vacant Syrian tents soon restored plenty to the houses of the Samaritans; and Benhadad, after his return to his own kingdom, was murdered by Hazael, who succeeded to the throne, according to the prediction of the prophet Elijah.

Jehoram, soon after the death of Benhadad, entered into an alliance with Ahaziah, king of Judah, in order to recover Ramoth Gilead; but their united forces were defeated by the Syrians, and the king of Israel, who was severely wounded in the action, retired to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds. In the mean time Elisha, by the command of the Almighty, sent one of the "sons of the prophets" to anoint Jehu king of Israel; and the new sovereign, who was a general, and a great favorite with the army, immediately advanced towards Jezreel. Hearing of his approach, Jehoram went out to meet him, accompanied by Ahaziah, who himself was also of the house of Ahab. The conference between them was very brief: Jehu shot Jehoram through the heart, with an arrow, and ordered his body to be thrown into the vineyard of Naboth; while Ahaziah, who had fled, was overtaken and slain, though his servants succeeded in conveying his body to Jerusalem, and burying it in the sepulchre of his fathers. These events occurred 884 A. C.

Jehu immediately advanced to Jezreel without opposition but as he entered the city, Jezebel, royally arrayed, presented herself at a window of the palace, and upbraided

him in the bitterest terms, for his treason. This so incensed Jehu, that he commanded her own servants to cast her headlong down upon the pavement below; which having been done, her body was soon trampled under foot by horses. In the evening Jehu gave orders for her interment; but on examination, it was found that the greater part of the body had been devoured by dogs, and beasts of prey, according to the prediction of Elijah. The rest of Ahab's family, seventy in number, were in Samaria, and were there all put to death by the men in power, and their heads sent by them to the new king, in evidence of their submission to his authority. Jehu now completely extirpated the worship of Baal, not only in Samaria, but throughout every part of his kingdom; but he still continued the idolatry which Jeroboam had established, and for this reason God limited the duration of his dynasty to his descendants of the fourth generation. Jehu died in 856 A. C., after a reign of twenty-eight years, and was succeeded by his son, JEHOAHAZ.

JEHOAHAZ, following the example of his father, adhered to the worship of the golden calves; and as a punishment for thus persisting in idolatry, the Syrians were allowed to extend their authority to the west of the Jordan, and so far to prevail, as at length, to leave to the king of Israel, as his entire force, no more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand infantry. In this reduced condition of his kingdom Jehoahaz died, in 839 A. C., after a reign of seventeen years.

JEHOAHAZ was succeeded on the throne by his son, JOASH. This king, though he bears a better character than most of the Israelitish monarchs, still followed in the steps of Jeroboam. He had scarcely commenced his reign before he heard of the fatal illness of Elisha; and while weeping at his death-bed, the aged prophet cheered the king

with the intelligence that God designed to use him as the instrument of delivering Israel from the oppression of the Syrians. The dying words of Elisha were soon verified; for in three successive battles which soon followed, the Syrians were defeated, and the cities that they had previously taken, restored to the kingdom of Israel. Joash also repulsed the Moabites, who had invaded his territories; and finally, on a challenge from Amaziah, king of Judah, met the army of that monarch, defeated it, and, entering Jerusalem, "took the gold and silver, and the vessels that were found in the Temple, and the king's treasures, and returned to Samaria." These successes partially restored Israel to its former glory; but Joash did not long live to enjoy the peace and prosperity that followed. He died in 823 A. C., after a reign of sixteen years, and was succeeded by his son JEROBOAM the second.

JEROBOAM followed in the steps of his father. He prosecuted successfully the war with Syria, retook Damascus and Hamath, and restored the ancient borders of his kingdom. These successes were not, however, followed by any religious reformation; and hence the Almighty now began to warn the Israelites, by his prophets Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, of the doom of captivity and dispersion which their crimes would speedily bring down upon them. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, and died in 782 A. C.

The reign of Jeroboam was followed by an interregnum of eleven years; which was, perhaps, occasioned by the infancy of his son, Zechariah. During that period, the country fell into such a state of anarchy and confusion, that the people were at length compelled to place ZECHARIAH, though still very young, upon the throne of his fathers. It was soon found, however, that he was not

equal to the emergency of the times; and after having reigned but six months, the young king was murdered by one SHALLUM, who immediately usurped the government. Thus ended, in 771 A. C., the dynasty of JEHU, as had been foretold by the prophet.

SHALLUM did not, however, long retain the power he had attained by the death of Zechariah; for he was himself assassinated by MENAHEM, about six months after he ascended the throne. But the act of Menahem was not sanctioned by public opinion, and the nation generally refused to acknowledge his authority. In this distracted state of the country, the Assyrians, a new enemy, first made their appearance, under Pul, supposed, by some writers, to be the Sardanapalus of profane history. This conqueror was advancing to invade Israel when Menahem made submission to him, and, by the payment of a thousand talents of silver, procured his assistance against his own refractory subjects.

MENAHEM exercised, with great severity, the power he had thus acquired by foreign aid; and the heavy annual tribute which he had engaged to pay the Assyrians, in some degree compelled him to extort large sums of money from the people. Israel was, by this means, soon reduced to the most deplorable condition. The land became impoverished, and the people exasperated; and the Assyrians, having so largely profited by their previous invasions of the country, were ready to avail themselves of any pretext for repeating the experiment. Unfortunately, the state of religion and morals corresponded with this external condition. With the rapid growth of idolatry, and the neglect of that religious system which, when observed, had ever been the true glory of the nation, the people lost all love for the good and the beautiful, and gave themselves up to the grossest abominations that the heart of man can con

ceive. It thus became evident that they were fast ripening for that destruction of which the prophets had so faithfully forewarned them. In 760 A. C., after a troubled reign of ten years, MENAHEM died, and was succeeded by his son PEKAHIAH.

Of PEKAHIAH nothing farther is known than that, after a turbulent reign of two years, he was murdered by PEKAH, one of his generals, who usurped the throne.

PEKAH, though a wicked and sanguinary prince, yet, on account of the sins of Ahaz, king of Judah, was permitted to prevail over the rival kingdom. In conjunction with Rezin, king of Damascus, he invaded Judah, and brought away a vast number of captives; but upon the injunction of the prophet Obed, he immediately restored them all to their own country. Notwithstanding this single act of obedience, however, the sins of the Israelites continued to increase, and the threatened punishment began, therefore, to be inflicted. The Assyrian hosts ravaged all the country beyond the Jordan; the interior of the kingdom was torn by factions, and in the midst of these tumults PEKAH, after a reign of twenty years, was slain by HOSHEA, 739 A. C.

After two years of civil war, HOSHEA succeeded in fixing himself upon the throne; but during the interval, the Assyrians, under Tiglath-pileser, and his son Shalmaneser, overran the kingdom and rendered it tributary. As soon as his title to the crown was established, Hoshea became anxious to render himself independent of his oppressors; and, with this view, he entered into alliance with Sabaco, an Ethiopian prince who had recently subdued Egypt. Shalmaneser, hearing of this alliance, immediately invaded the country with an immense force, and laid siege to Samaria the capital. After a brave resistance of three years the city was taken by storm, HOSHEA, the king, sent

in chains to Nineveh, and the people carried captive into some distant region beyond the Euphrates.

Thus, in 719 A. C., perished the kingdom of Israel, after having existed, as a separate state, two hundred and seventy-one years. The country was reduced to the condition of an Assyrian province, and re-peopled by new settlers brought from the region of the Lower Tigris and Euphrates. These, after some years had elapsed, gradually amalgamated with those Israelites who had been permitted to remain in the land; and, in conjunction with them, they eventually formed a religious creed founded entirely upon the Books of Moses. Between them, however, and the people of Judah, the bitterest enmity ever after existed.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

KINGS OF JUDAH.

SECTION I.

REHOBOAM:—His Apostasy—Invasion of Shishak, King of Egypt—ABIJAH—Successful Invasion of Israel—ASA—His Reformations—Victory over the Ethiopians—League with the Syrians—His Death, and Character—JEHOSHAPHAT—Measures to secure the Peace and Prosperity of his Kingdom—Unites with Ahab, King of Israel, against the Syrians—Forms other Alliances with Israel—Triumphs over the united Forces of his Enemies—Happy Close of his Reign.

WE now return to the history of the kingdom of Judah. When REHOBOAM, who still remained at Shechem, heard that the ten tribes had determined to throw off their allegiance to him, he became alarmed, and sent Adoram, the collector, to appease the people, and to promise them that their taxes should be abated. This proposed pacification came, however, too late; for their passions were now so excited that they immediately fell upon the collector and stoned him to death. Upon receiving intelligence of this sad event, Rehoboam immediately entered his chariot and hastened to Jerusalem, in order to secure the adherence of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to the house of David.

Fired with resentment at the insult given to himself, in the person of his collector, Adoram, Rehoboam resolved to punish the disaffected Israelites with the utmost severity. With this view he collected, immediately after his return to Jerusalem, from the two tribes that remained firm in their allegiance to him, one hundred and eighty thousand choice troops, which he designed to lead against the ten re-

volting tribes, and reduce them at once to obedience. But in the midst of these warlike preparations the prophet Shemaiah appeared before him, and, under Divine inspiration, directed him to desist from attempting to prosecute his design, as it was the will of God, according to the prediction of the prophet Ahijah, that the division of the kingdom should take place. On receiving this prophetic declaration, Rehoboam at once disbanded his army; after which, for his own defense, he built and garrisoned several strongholds in different parts of the country, and placed large magazines in all the cities that were in the immediate vicinity of his capital.

As a matter of state policy Rehoboam, during the first three years of his reign, sustained the true worship of God at Jerusalem; but as soon as the subjects of Jero boam ceased to repair thither to worship, he threw off the mask, and both he and his people became more idolatrous than even their wicked neighbors of Israel. They not only "built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill," but, to add to their gross impiety, they introduced every detestable act of wickedness for which the ancient Canaanites had been so justly expelled from the country.

To punish Rehoboam for this apostasy the Almighty, in the fifth year of that prince's reign, allowed Shishak, king of Egypt, to invade the land; and after having taken several fortified towns, he entered Jerusalem, and carried off the treasures of the Temple and the palace, together with the golden shields of Solomon. As this severe punishment produced the desired repentance, the remaining twelve years of Rehoboam's reign were prosperous; and at his death, which occurred 958 A. C., and in the eighteenth year of his reign, he left a peaceful sceptre to his son and successor ABIJAH.

ABIJAH was the son of Rehoboam by Maachah, the grand daughter of Absalom. Though young, he was an active and martial prince; and he resolved, therefore, to bring back, by force of arms, the ten tribes to obedience. For this purpose he raised an army of four hundred thousand men and marched against Jeroboam, who met him with a force of double that number. As soon as the two armies were drawn up in order of battle, Abijah ascended Mount Zemaraim, and thence addressing the Israelitish army, he pointed out the injustice of their revolt from his father Rehoboam; his own right to the entire kingdom, as God had given it to David, and his posterity; and the expectation he had of the Divine assistance in the approaching contest, since the religion of the Israelites had become false and idolatrous, while the men of Judah preserved the pure worship of the living God, having his Temple and his ordinance in their midst.

Before Abijah had finished his address, Jeroboam, confident of victory, ordered a detachment of his army to pass to the rear in order to cut off their retreat. This movement greatly alarmed the troops of Abijah; but he, with consummate address, raised their courage, and then exhorted them to depend exclusively on the aid of the Almighty, who, he was assured, would render abortive any efforts against the righteous cause in which they were engaged. In the action that immediately followed Abijah gained a complete victory—five hundred thousand of the enemy being left dead upon the field of battle. This victory was followed by the capture of several of the border towns of Israel, among which was Bethel, the seat of one of the golden calves. We are not informed, however, that Abijah destroyed the idol; and it seems that the town itself was ultimately recovered by Israel.

Had the life of Abijah been prolonged, it is probable

that, in the course of a few years, he would have succeeded in reducing the whole kingdom of Israel to subjection to his authority; but the Almighty had different purposes in view with regard to that people, and, therefore, he now removed the agent with which he had so severely chastised them. Abijah died 955 A. C., in the third year of his reign, and was succeeded by his son ASA.

ASA was a prince of great piety and virtue, and "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David, his father." As he enjoyed the happiness of a settled peace for the first ten years of his reign, he wisely employed his time in removing the gross vices which, in former reigns, had been introduced into his kingdom. He broke down the idols and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah, and employed all the means in his power to restore the true worship of God. He also fortified several cities on the frontiers of his kingdom, and trained so many of his subjects in the art of war, that he soon had an army consisting of five hundred and eighty thousand, all of whom were men of true courage, and prepared to hazard their lives in defense of their country.

While the kingdom of Judah was thus in the full enjoyment of peace and prosperity, Asa, in 941 A. C., was suddenly surprised by an invasion of his country by the Cushites, or Ethiopians, under Zerah, their king. The army of this enemy contained a million of men, besides three hundred armed chariots. To meet this vast host the pious Asa went forth with a comparatively small force, confident that the Almighty could, with equal facility, enable him to prevail with few or with many. As he approached the valley of Zephathah, in the southern part of his kingdom, and beheld the formidable power of Zerah, he, in the presence of his whole army, bowed himself before the Lord, and with the utmost devotion, offered the

following fervent prayer: "Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord, our God; for we rest in thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God: let no man prevail against thee."

Having thus placed his cause in the hands of the Almighty, Asa boldly assailed the enemy; and as God, at the same time, infused a general fear into the minds of the Ethiopians, they immediately gave way—advantage of which being taken by the army of Asa, vast numbers of the enemy were killed on the spot, and the rest fled with the utmost precipitation. Asa and his victorious army closely pursued the fugitives, killed many in their flight, took the spoils of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote the cities that were in league with them, and then returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

As Asa, on his return with his victorious army, approached Jerusalem, he was met by the prophet Ahaziah, who reminded him that his recent triumph over his enemies must be attributed entirely to the interposition of the Almighty; and that, in order to secure a continuance of the same favor, he must persevere in the righteous reformation which he had so happily commenced. Encouraged by this assurance of Divine favor, he, during the succeeding five years, followed up his reformations with a still more vigorous and less sparing hand. Even Maachah, his own grand mother, and the guardian of his youth, was banished from court on account of her idolatries. Judah, by these vast reformations, now contrasted so favorably with Israel, that multitudes of the well-disposed subjects of the latter kingdom removed into the former.

Alarmed at the defection of so many of his subjects, Baasha, king of Israel, adopted the measures which have already been mentioned, to check the communication be-

tween the two kingdoms. Asa observed these measures of Baasha with great concern; and as he regarded them as a prelude only to farther encroachments, he resolved to stop his progress before it should be too late. With this view he induced Benhadad, king of Syria, by offering him presents in gold and silver, to make a diversion in his favor. Benhadad, accordingly, immediately attacked several cities of the Israelites, and thus forced Baasha to abandon his design of fortifying Ramah, in order to defend other parts of his kingdom.

The conduct of Asa, in applying to Benhadad for assistance on this occasion, was, certainly, very inexcusable. It evidently implied a distrust of God's power and willingness to aid him; and the Almighty, therefore, sent the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, to reprove him for it. But instead of receiving the reproof with a meek and quiet temper, he was so exasperated, that he put the prophet in chains, and ordered many of his subjects, who favored the course of Jehu, to be put to death.

The close of Asa's life was marked by a peevish and fretful temper. He was afflicted with a grievous disease in his feet, which was, perhaps, what we now call the gout; and this eventually caused his death, in the forty-first year of his reign, and 914 A. C. Instead of being buried according to the usual custom of the Hebrews, Asa's body was burned with perfumes and spices, after which his bones and ashes were collected together and buried with the utmost magnificence, in a sepulchre which he had previously prepared for himself in the city of David.

Asa was one of the few kings of Judah who obtained the testimony that he walked in the steps of David his father. His sincere and prudent zeal against the idolatry of his immediate ancestors, and the thoroughness with

which he carried out the reformation, entitle him to a place among the best of the kings. He kept steadily in view his true position as the vicegerent of the Almighty, who was the real king of his people. He acted generally from conscience, and not from policy; and though some of his latter years were stained with unbelief and cruelty, yet the prevailing purpose of his life was, "to seek the Lord God of his fathers with all his heart."

JEHOSHAPHAT, the son and successor of Asa, excelled even his excellent father in piety and virtue. After having first established garrisons in the several ungarrisoned cities of his dominions, he next removed those idolatrous high places and groves which Asa had left undisturbed. Becoming now convinced that the most effectual means of preventing the return of the corruptions which had, with so much difficulty, been rooted out, was to provide for the suitable instruction of the people, he, in the third year of his reign, sent out through all the cities of Judah a number of chiefs or *princes*, whose rank and influence secured respect and attention, to the priests and Levites, who were to aid them in instructing the people in the law of Moses. The king himself also made a tour through his dominions, in order to see that his instructions were thoroughly carried out.

Such wise and judicious measures, even in the infancy of his government, at once secured the hearts of the people; and to enable the king to support his dignity as sovereign, they brought him rich presents from every part of his dominions. Even the Philistines came voluntarily and paid him a tribute, which they had for some years withheld; and the Arabians, whose wealth consisted in their herds and cattle, sent him annually, as an acknowledgment of their homage, seven thousand seven hundred rams, and the same number of he-goats.

To secure himself in this tranquil state, Jehoshaphat took the utmost care to make himself strong in arms, as well as in wealth. He formed an army of eleven hundred and sixty thousand men, besides those who were in garrisons and such fortified places as he had abundantly supplied with all kinds of military stores. In short, he was rich and happy, great and powerful; beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies. This unusual prosperity continued, unalloyed, during more than half of his reign; but at length he committed the great mistake of forming an alliance with the impious Ahab, king of Israel, by uniting his son Jehoram in marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of that wicked monarch.

The connection thus formed, produced a friendly inter course between the two kings; and while Jehoshaphat, soon after, was on a visit to Ahab, he permitted himself to be persuaded by that king to join him in an expedition to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. The two kings, accordingly, marched, at the head of their respective forces, against the place; but in the battle that followed, Ahab was killed by a random shot, or "a bow drawn at a venture," and Jehoshaphat narrowly escaped with his life to Jerusalem. On the way thither he was met by the prophet Jehu, who severely reproved him for having formed any connection with the wicked and idolatrous Ahab. This rebuke so deeply affected the king, that he no sooner arrived at Jerusalem than he offered a public sacrifice in acknowledgment of his error, and earnestly prayed that his offense might be forgiven.

In order to prove the sincerity of his repentance, Jehoshaphat evinced fresh zeal for the purity of religious worship, and the happiness of his subjects; and, that he might personally witness the effect of his recent directions for their instruction, he again passed through every part of

his dominions. He observed, during this tour, that many abuses still existed; and to remedy these he instituted courts, both civil and religious, in all the chief cities of the land, with two superior courts of appeal at Jerusalem. Over the former of these courts, Zebadiah, ruler of the house of Judah, presided, and over the latter, Amariah, the chief priest.

Jehoshaphat next turned his attention to the re-opening of the maritime traffic which Solomon had so successfully carried on by the way of the Red Sea. He, however, unwisely allowed Ahaziah, king of Israel, to unite with him in this enterprise; in consequence of which the Almighty refused to prosper the undertaking, and the ships were, accordingly, destroyed by a storm, soon after they had left the port of Ezion-Geber. Informed by the prophet Eliezer of the cause of this misfortune, Jehoshaphat abandoned the enterprise altogether, and returned to Jerusalem.

In the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, Moab fell under the dominion of the latter; and it remained in subjection until the death of Ahab, when it attempted to throw off the Israelitish yoke. To reduce them again to obedience the king of Israel obtained the aid of Jehoshaphat; and this so exasperated the Moabites, that they determined to wreak their vengeance upon the king of Judah. With this view, assisted by the Ammonites, the Edomites, and some Arabian tribes, they raised an immense army and encamped at Engedi, within thirty miles of Jerusalem.

Conscious of his inability to meet this vast host without Divine aid, "Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." He immediately after convened a general assembly of the people, and, standing in their presence in the court of the

Temple, he offered up an earnest prayer, acknowledging the sovereign power of the Almighty in all things; pleading his promise to hear the cries of his people in every emergency; urging their present danger and distress, as a reason for his present interposition in their behalf; and then closing his petition with these memorable words:— "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

The prayer of the king was scarcely closed before Jahaziel, a Levite, moved by the spirit of the Lord, appeared in the midst of the assembly, and encouraged them to go without fear, and meet the enemy; "for," said he, "the battle is not yours, but God's." This welcome intelligence so deeply affected the king and the whole assembly, that they immediately bowed their faces to the earth, and offered to the Almighty unfeigned thanksgivings. In the following morning they marched forth, according to the directions of the prophet, to meet the foe; but not so much in the strength of arms, as in the strength of faith. In front of the army Jehoshaphat placed a band of singers, who chanted forth, as they advanced, "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever." As they approached the army of the allies, these singers raised their voices to the highest pitch; confusion and disorder amongst their enemies immediately followed; and when the army of Jehoshaphat reached the scene of their strife, their enemies were fallen, "and nothing was left for them but to take the spoils of the slain."

The spoil taken upon this occasion was so great that it occupied the army of Jehoshaphat three days to gather it together; and as they advanced with it towards Jerusalem, they halted in the valley of Shaveh, and there offered a

solemn thanksgiving to their Divine Deliverer. The few remaining years of the life of this excellent prince were devoted to the farther improvement of his subjects and his kingdom; and at his death, which occurred in the twenty-sixth year of his reign, and the sixty-first of his age, 889 A. C., he was buried in the land of his fathers, in the city of David.

SECTION II.

JEHORAM:—The evil Consequences of his marriage with Athaliah—AHAZIAH—Athaliah usurps the Government—Her death—JEHOASH—Repairs the Temple and the City—Death of the High-Priest, Zachariah—Punishment of Jehoash—AMAZIAH—Restores the worship of the Temple—Resolves to reduce the Edomites—Ordered by the Prophet to dismiss his Israelitish Allies—Is disgracefully defeated by the King of Israel.

JEHORAM, the son and successor of the pious Jehoshaphat, came to the throne of Judah in 889 A. C., and in the thirty-third year of his age. The evil consequences of his marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, now appeared in all their fearfulness. Through her influence Jehoram, in the very commencement of his reign, was induced to subvert the worship of the Almighty, and to introduce all the corruptions that prevailed in the kingdom of Israel. This act of sinful apostasy was followed by crimes of the most revolting character. Jehoshaphat, his father, had six other sons, each of whom he had, during his own lifetime, settled as governor of a fenced city, with an independent income. All these, together with many other of the chief men of the nation, Jehoram caused to be brutally murdered.

Tidings of these acts of gross wickedness soon reached the prophet Elisha; and he, under Divine inspiration, at

once denounced the vengeance of the Almighty upon Jehoram and his house. This vengeance was speedily executed. The Edomites revolted, "and made themselves a king;" and the people of Libnah, a city on the borders of Arabia, shook off their allegiance, and refused any longer to acknowledge him as their sovereign. These were, however, but the beginning of Jehoram's troubles; for soon after, the Philistines and Arabians invaded his dominions, ravaged the country, plundered his palace, carried off his wives and children, with the exception of his wife Athaliah, and his son Ahaziah, and returned in triumph to their homes.

To fill up the measure of the wicked king's punishment, God at length afflicted him with an awful disease, under the influence of which he languished in great torments for two years, and then died, in the eighth year of his reign—four of which conjointly with his father, and four as sole sovereign—885 A. C. Jehoram was buried in the city of David; but in such contempt did his subjects hold him, that instead of allowing his body to rest in the sepulchre of his ancestors, they deposited it in a private place by itself.

Ahaziah, or Jehoahaz, the youngest son of Jehoram, succeeded to the throne in the twenty-second year of his age. His character varied very little from that of his father; and being connected by birth with the house of Ahab, he soon identified himself with them. He joined his uncle, Jehoram, king of Israel, in another effort to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the Syrians. In the battle which followed Jehoram was wounded, in consequence of which he returned, accompanied by Ahaziah, to Jezreel, to be healed. The conspiracy of Jehu, whom God had commissioned to exterminate the house of Ahab, immediately followed, and in its course swept off both Jehoram and

Ahaziah; but while the body of the former was cast into the field of Naboth, unburied, that of the latter was conveyed by his servants to Jerusalem, and buried in the royal sepulchre. The death of Ahaziah occurred in the second year of his reign, 884 A. C.

Athaliah, the queen-mother, as soon as she heard of the death of her son, determined to take the government of Judah into her own hands; and, in order to secure her authority, she immediately gave orders that every one of the line of David who possessed an hereditary claim to the throne, should be put to death. These orders were so strictly executed, that of the entire royal family none escaped except Jehoash, the infant son of the late king. This child, then only one year old, was under the care of Jehosheba, the wife of Jehoiada, the high-priest. She concealed him for some time in her own house; but for his greater safety she afterwards kept him in a secret apartment of the Temple, where she nourished him for six years, and none knew of his existence but herself and Jehoiada.

In the mean time Athaliah ruled Judah with uncontrolled authority. She established the worship of Baal in every part of the land, and persecuted, with unrelenting severity, all who still adhered to the worship of Jehovah. Thus passed the six years of Athaliah's reign; but Jehoiada, the high-priest, now resolved that the nation should no longer endure her persecutions and oppressions. He, therefore, at once concerted measures to place the young Jehoash on the throne of his ancestors. With this view he secretly brought over to his interest the leading men of the army, and many of the chiefs of the kingdom; and having bound them by oath to fidelity, he dispersed them through the kingdom, to summon the priests, the Levites, and the principal men of the tribes, to meet him, without delay, at Jerusalem.

As soon as this important assembly came together, the high-priest informed them of the existence of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, and of the manner in which his life had been preserved; and then proposed to place him at once upon the throne of David. This proposition being universally approved of by the assembly, they first armed themselves, and then separated into three parties—one to guard the person of the young king, and the other two to guard the avenues to the Temple. These preparations being completed, the young prince, under a strong escort of priests, was carried into the inner court of the Temple, and was there anointed, crowned, and proclaimed king of Judah.

The joyful acclamations of the people soon reached Athaliah in her palace; and summoning her guards, she hastened to the Temple to ascertain the cause of this sudden exultation. Being permitted by the priests to enter, without her guards, the first object presented to her view was the young king, seated upon a temporary throne, with the crown of royalty upon his head, and surrounded by the most distinguished men of the nation. Terrified by this appalling sight, Athaliah involuntarily exclaimed, "Treason, treason;" but Jehoiada, the high-priest, soon silenced her, by ordering the guards immediately to conduct her out of the Temple and put her to death; as that sacred place ought not to be polluted by the blood of one so abandoned to all kinds of wickedness. In obedience to these orders, the guards conducted Athaliah to the stable-gate of the palace, and there, without opposition, put her to death, 878 A. C.

Immediately after the execution of Athaliah, Jehoiada again assembled the people in the Temple, and administered to them the oath of allegiance to their new king. He then made two covenants, one between the Lord and the

king and the people, and the other between the king and the people alone. By the first, the worship of God was to be restored, and idolatry entirely abolished; and by the second, the king was to govern according to law, and the people to pay a proper reverence to him as their legal sovereign.

These ceremonies were no sooner over, than the whole multitude hastened to the temple of Baal, which had been recently built near Jerusalem; and, after destroying the image of that idol, and every kind of ornament within the building, they levelled the whole structure with the ground. Jehoiada now, in accordance with the institution of David, committed the care of the Temple of Jerusalem to the priests and the Levites; and in accordance with the law of Moses, appointed a solemn sacrifice and incense to be offered daily. Having thus completely reformed the Temple service, Jehoiada, with the rulers and officers of the government, conducted Jehoash to the palace, seated him on the royal throne, and put him into quiet possession of his kingdom.

Jehoash was seven years of age when he was placed upon the throne, and during his minority the government was well administered under the regency of Jehoiada, who restored the worship of the true God; "but the high places were not taken away."

The attention of Jehoash, soon after he assumed the administration of the government himself, was directed to the dilapidated condition into which the Temple had been permitted to fall during the reign of Jehoram and Athaliah; and he, therefore, resolved thoroughly to repair it. As the royal treasury was, however, comparatively empty, he directed Jehoiada, the high-priest, to devise such means for collecting the requisite sums from the people for this purpose, as would be least oppressive to them. Accord-

ingly, in the twenty-third year of Jehoash's reign, a proclamation was made throughout all Judah, requesting the people to bring to the treasury of the Lord the collection that Moses laid upon them in the wilderness. "Jehoiada, therefore, took a chest, and made a hole in the lid of it," and into this all the money-gifts for the Temple were deposited. The offerings of the people were willingly and liberally made; and after a short time the high-priest and the king's scribe took out the money and counted it, "and gave it to those that did the work, that had the oversight of the Temple." "So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it."

The Temple had scarcely been restored to its original purity and beauty, before the nation was called to mourn the loss of the good priest Jehoiada. His life had, however, been prolonged to the extraordinary age of one hundred and thirty years; and at his death, such was the reverence in which his memory was held, that he was buried in the royal sepulchre.

The death of Jehoiada was productive of the most fatal consequences, both to the king and the people. The principal men of the court, who were at heart idolaters, taking advantage of the weakness of Jehoash, first artfully obtained permission for themselves to worship their favorite idols, and then gradually led the king into the same apostasy. Their example was soon followed by the mass of the people; and the consequence was, that the Temple worship was forsaken, and the established religion gradually fell into contempt. These acts of impiety were so highly offensive to God, that he sent his prophets to expostulate with both the king and the people, on their wicked apostasy, and to threaten them with severe punishment, unless they immediately reformed, and returned to the true wor-

ship of Jehovah. But the judgments denounced against them, notwithstanding the frequent punishments inflicted on their predecessors, had no effect towards producing a reformation. At length Zachariah, the high-priest, son and successor of Jehoiada, appeared in the presence of the king, and so vehemently inveighed against his abominable idolatry that Jehoash, forgetting all past obligations to his family, ordered him to be immediately stoned to death.

The death of the pious priest and prophet Zachariah, and the other enormous sins of which Jehoash had recently become guilty, soon drew forth that signal vengeance of Heaven which they so richly merited. In the course of the following year Hazael, king of Syria, entered the land of Judah at the head of a large army; and, having taken Gath, proceeded towards Jerusalem, putting to death, as he advanced, the most distinguished of those princes who had been the means of seducing their king to idolatry. As Jehoash was in no condition to resist this powerful foe, he took all the rich vessels which his ancestors had devoted to the service of God, the gold and silver found in the treasury of the Temple, and in the royal treasury, and offered them to Hazael, on condition that he would withdraw his troops. This offer was accepted by Hazael, and he returned with his forces to Damascus; but, in the following year the Syrians, without Hazael, again invaded Judah, defeated the army of Jehoash, made great havoc in the country, entered Jerusalem, and, after murdering many of the princes and chief rulers of the city, treated Jehoash himself with the utmost indignity.

The punishment of the wicked Jehoash did not, however, stop here; for, no sooner had the Syrian army departed from the country than he was seized with a complication of distempers, which confined him to his

private apartments, where he was soon after murdered by Zabad and Jehozabad, two of his own servants, in revenge for the death of Zachariah. Thus ended the career of this weak and treacherous prince, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and the forty-first of his reign, 838 A. C. He was buried in the city of Jerusalem; but his impious practices, during the latter part of his reign, had rendered him so obnoxious to the people, that his body was denied a place in the royal sepulchre.

Amaziah, the son of Jehoash, succeeded to the throne in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He commenced his reign by re-establishing the worship of Jehovah, and all seemed well; but he suffered the high places to remain, and permitted the people there to offer sacrifices and burn incense. As soon as he was established on the throne, he caused the two traitors who had murdered his father to be put to death; but he showed his respect for the law of Moses, by sparing their children, contrary to the usual custom of that age.

In the twelfth year of his reign, Amaziah resolved to reduce to obedience the Edomites, who had revolted from Judah during the reign of Jeroboam. For this purpose he raised an army from among his own subjects of three hundred thousand men; but not deeming this force sufficient, he obtained from the king of Israel one hundred thousand auxiliaries, for whose services he paid a hundred talents of silver. As the combined army was ready to march against the Edomites, a prophet of the Lord appeared before the king, and, under Divine direction, ordered him to dismiss the hired troops from his service. Amaziah did as the prophet directed, and thus evinced a high sense of his own position as the viceroy of the Divine King, though the act involved the loss of the money he had advanced.

The troops of the king of Israel were deeply incensed at their dismissal from the army of Amaziah; and therefore, in their return home, they plundered many of the cities of Judah, put to death no less than three thousand men, and carried away much booty, to compensate them for their anticipated share of the spoils of the Edomites. Amaziah was, however, abundantly rewarded for his obedience to the Divine command; for in the battle that followed, he gained a complete victory over the Edomites, leaving ten thousand of them dead upon the field, and taking ten thousand prisoners. He then marched his army to Selah, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, captured the place, and, from the rock upon which it stood, cruelly precipitated his ten thousand prisoners to the depth below.

But the savage cruelty of Amaziah to the captive Edomites was not the worst evil connected with this expedition; for, having brought away with him the idols of Edom, he, with wonderful infatuation, set them up as objects of religious homage at Jerusalem, and the service of the Temple of Jehovah was once more shamefully forsaken. His conduct so highly offended the Almighty, that he sent a prophet to reprove him for his apostasy; but instead of paying any regard to his message, he threatened, if he did not desist, to put him to death.

Elated with his victory over the Edomites, Amaziah now formed the wild project of bringing the ten tribes of Israel under obedience to the house of David. With this view he provoked Joash, their king, to hostilities, though the latter used every effort to avoid them. The two armies met at a place called Bethshemesh, within the borders of Judah; and no sooner were they drawn up in battle array, than the troops of Amaziah became terrified and fled, leaving their king to the mercy of his antagonist. Joash immediately marched his army, accompanied by his

royal prisoner, to Jerusalem, demolished the fortifications of the city, plundered the Temple and the palace of their riches, and then returned to Samaria, leaving Amaziah in possession of his dishonored crown.

After this disagraceful defeat by the king of Israel, Amaziah lived about fifteen years; but we have no farther information of him, than that he still persisted in his idolatry, and continued till his death to remain under the Divine displeasure. Towards the close of his life, he carried his idolatrous practices to such lengths, that he fell under the contempt of his own subjects; and a conspiracy was, consequently, formed against his life. Amaziah, having received intimation of this conspiracy, fled to Lachish, one of the frontier towns of the Philistines; but he was pursued thither and privately murdered; after which his body was secretly brought back to Jerusalem, and buried without ceremony in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Thus perished Amaziah, king of Judah, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and thirtieth of his reign, 809 A. C.

SECTION III.

UZZIAH:—Triumphs over the Philistines and Arabians—Improves Jerusalem—Usurps the Priestly Functions, and is smitten with Leprosy—JOTHAM—A Virtuous and Successful Prince—AHAZ—For his Idolatry, God permitted Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel, successfully to invade Judah—HEZEKIAH—His Excellent Character—Revives the Passover—Judah invaded by Sennacherib—God interposes for Hezekiah—His Sickness and Miraculous Cure.

UZZIAH, sometimes called AZARIAH, was raised to the throne of Judah when only sixteen years of age; and, notwithstanding his extreme youth, his conduct from the very commencement of his reign was marked by the great-

est discretion. He was active, valiant, courteous, just, and pious; and the Almighty, accordingly, blessed him in all his ways.

As soon as he had regularly organized his government, Uzziah marched against the Philistines; and, having defeated them in several battles, he dismantled many of their principal towns, and built cities in different parts of the surrounding country, to keep them in subjection. He next went against the Arabians, who dwelt upon the borders of Egypt, and the Mehunims, a tribe that lived in the desert part of the country, and speedily overcame them both. The Ammonites, and other surrounding nations, were so terrified at these successes of the king of Judah, that they willingly became his tributaries.

Having thus triumphed over his enemies abroad, Uzziah next turned his attention towards Jerusalem and the surrounding country. He restored and fortified the walls of the city, and placed upon them engines of defense, for discharging arrows and large stones. He constructed aqueducts, cisterns, and basins, for the convenience of his cattle; and employed many planters in the plains and vinedressers on the mountains, to bring to perfection the fruits of the earth. But the chief glory of Uzziah's kingdom lay in his military force. His army consisted of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred select troops, under the command of two thousand six hundred brave and experienced officers, who had been trained up in the most perfect knowledge of the military art. The men were all furnished with swords, bucklers, spears, helmets, bows, slings, and other warlike weapons, and were divided into bands, and ordered to hold themselves in readiness to be called out in rotation as occasion might require them.

Uzziah's prosperity was uninterrupted during the life of his counsellor Zechariah; but soon after that faithful

friend's death, which occurred in the twenty-fourth year of the king's reign, he began to neglect the worship of God, and become remiss in his attention to other duties. At length, incited perhaps by the example of the neighboring kings, who united both the regal and pontifical functions, he, having first clothed himself in the dress of a priest, went to the Temple to offer incense on the golden altar. As soon as Azariah, the high-priest, was informed of the design of the king, he, accompanied by eighty other priests, repaired to the Temple and earnestly remonstrated against such an assumption of the sacerdotal rights. But his remonstrance had no other effect than to throw Uzziah into the utmost rage, and to lead him to treat the high-priest with the greatest indignity. God, however, himself vindicated the sacredness of the sacerdotal office ; for no sooner had the king taken the censer in his hand to burn incense, than he was smitten with leprosy, upon which, fearful lest the Divine vengeance should punish him with instant death, he at once left the Temple, and hastened to his palace.

The disease with which Uzziah was afflicted being incurable, the functions of government were assumed by Jotham, as his father's viceroy, and the king was obliged to quit the palace, and occupy a private dwelling, detached from the city. In this loathsome condition he remained for nineteen years; and at his death, which occurred in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and fifty-second of his reign, 757 A. C., he was buried in a field adjacent to the royal sepulchre.

Jotham, the son and successor of Uzziah, ascended the throne in the twenty-sixth year of his age, though, from his father's infirmities, he had already administered the government for several years. He was remarkable for every virtue and excellence, and in matters of religion

would have made a thorough reformation; but the people were so intensely wicked, that they frustrated his designs. He, however, repaired the Temple, rebuilt the high gate which led from his palace, and, for the security and defense of his kingdom, built various cities, castles, and towns, in different parts of his dominions.

These vigilant measures secured, for a number of years, the peace and tranquillity of the nation; but at length, the Ammonites invaded the country, and committed extensive depredations. Against this insolent foe Jotham marched with a large army, and not only drove them out of his kingdom, but imposed upon their king an annual tribute of a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand measures of barley. This tribute the Ammonites continued to pay for three years; but when, at the expiration of that time, Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, confederated against Judah, they revolted and regained their independence. Jotham soon after died, in the forty-first year of his age, and sixteenth of his reign, 741 A. C. He was buried amidst the universal lamentations of his subjects, in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Ahaz succeeded his father on the throne when he was in the twentieth year of his age. He proved a wicked and worthless prince; and instead of following the pious maxims of his father, he gave himself up entirely to idolatry, and even constrained his subjects to follow his wicked example. He did not, however, at this time carry his idolatrous practices as far as he intended, in consequence of the threatened invasion of his kingdom by Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, for which they had made preparation towards the close of his father's reign.

The design of the confederates was, first to take the city of Jerusalem, and then to extirpate the house of David,

and bestow the crown on one whom we know only as "Tabeal's son." This arrangement, however, proved abortive; for it was the will of God to punish Ahaz alone for his wickedness, and not to cut off the whole race of his servant David. He, therefore, sent the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz to encourage him to make the most vigorous defense possible against the enemy, and to assure him that they should not succeed in their purpose. The confederate kings at length marched a very large army into the kingdom of Judah; and after committing various depredations in different parts of the country, they laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz, in accordance with the direction of the prophet, made every possible effort to defend the city; and such was its strength, and the resolution of the people, that the enemy, finding themselves baffled in every attack, at length raised the siege, and returned home.

This manifest interposition of the Almighty in favor of Ahaz, had no other effect upon him than to render him more wicked and obdurate in his sins. He not only promoted the worship of the golden calves of Israel, but made molten images, also, of the idols of the surrounding nations, and to them offered sacrifices and burnt incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. These enormities were so offensive to God, that he resolved to punish Ahaz by the same allied powers whose efforts he had before frustrated.

Rezin and Pekah, accordingly, again brought together their forces; and to increase their strength, they called in the aid of Zichri, "a mighty man of Ephraim." These different leaders approached the dominions of Ahaz from three different quarters, and were all equally successful. Rezin took Elath, a port on the Red Sea, dispossessed the inhabitants, and put the place in the hands of the Edom-

ites, and then returned, with great spoil, in triumph to Damascus. Pekah marched against Ahaz, and in the battle that followed so terrible was the defeat of the forces of the latter, that no less than one hundred and twenty thousand of them were left dead upon the field. And Zichri, taking advantage of this victory, marched to Jerusalem, and having made himself master of the city, slew Maaseiah, the king's son, together with many of the principal members of the court.

After these two victories, the Israelitish armies, led by Pekah and Zichri, returned to Samaria, taking with them immense spoil, and more than two hundred thousand prisoners, whom they intended to sell into slavery. But as they approached the city, they were met by the prophet Oded, who remonstrated with them so earnestly and effectively on the great crime of making slaves of their brethren, that the two kings not only released their captives, but conducted them back into their own country as far as Jericho, and then left them to return at their leisure to their own homes.

The oppression of the kings of Syria and Israel had scarcely ceased, before the kingdom of Judah was invaded by other enemies no less inveterate against them. The Edomites from the south, and the Philistines from the west, invaded the country, seized all the contiguous cities, and committed other violent depredations. As Ahaz was not in a situation to repel these invaders himself, he sent ambassadors to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, with a present of all the gold and silver contained in the Temple, and an assurance that if he would send an army to his assistance, he would thenceforth consider himself his vassal. Pleased with this pretext for interfering in the affairs of the west, Tiglath-Pileser readily accepted the proposed conditions of Ahaz; and, accordingly, he marched a large

army into Syria, defeated and slew Rezin the king, in battle, and took possession of his dominions. He next advanced against the Hebrew possessions east of the Jordan, overran the country, and sent the three tribes—Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh—away captive into Assyria.

While Tiglath-Pileser was passing the following winter at Damascus, Ahaz paid him a visit to congratulate him on his success, and to pay him homage. He soon found, however, that, though temporarily relieved from an imminent danger, he had little cause to rejoice in the result. He had become tributary to a foreign power, and instead of a rival, had now a powerful and overbearing master for a neighbor.

On his return to Jerusalem, Ahaz carried with him a model of a curious idolatrous altar which he had found in Damascus; and, so soon as he could have one made after this pattern, he caused the altar of the Lord to be removed from the Temple, and this foreign altar put in its place. Thenceforth he adopted the Syrian worship, and his idolatries knew no bounds. He caused altars to be erected, not only in every part of Jerusalem, but in all the principal cities also of Judah, and on these, sacrifices without limit to be offered to the various idols of Syria. In the midst of these horrid impieties, his wicked career closed, at the early age of thirty-six, and in the sixteenth year of his reign, 725 A. C. Ahaz was buried in the city of David, but not in the royal sepulchre, his vicious life depriving him of that honor. He was, perhaps, the most incorrigible instance of persevering impiety that the history of the Hebrew kings presents. In this reign Micah delivered the prophecy which his book contains.

Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, was, perhaps, the most virtuous and pious monarch of all the line of

David. He ascended the throne in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and immediately evinced all those attributes which characterize a good king. He ordered the gates of the Temple to be again opened, the idolatrous altar of his father to be removed, and the altar of the Lord to be restored to its place. Then, assembling the priests and Levites, he addressed them in the most solemn and impressive manner, reminding them of the recent departure of the whole nation from God, and exhorting them to sanctify themselves, and unite with him "in a covenant with the Lord God of their fathers, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us."

Into this solemn covenant, the priests and Levites readily entered; and as soon as suitable preparations were made, the king, attended by all the chief men of the court, repaired to the Temple, and there offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings in such profusion that the officiating priests were compelled to call in the aid of the Levites. As soon as the sacrifices were ended, the king and all the congregation bowed in reverential worship before the Lord, and the Levites, with their instruments, "sang praises unto the Lord, in the words of David, and of Asaph, the seer."

The service of the Temple being thus restored, Hezekiah next proposed to revive the Passover, the observance of which had been greatly neglected, ever since the division of the kingdom. All the princes and chief men of the court approving this design, the king immediately directed that the necessary preparations should be made without delay, for carrying it into effect. A proclamation was accordingly issued, requiring not only the people of Judah, but also those of Israel, to repair to Jerusalem to attend the solemnity. But as neither the Temple, the priests, nor the people, could be sufficiently sanctified for the important

occasion by the first month of the year—the usual time for its observance—the celebration was postponed till the second.

The men of Judah unanimously obeyed the summons of their king; and to it many of the pious amongst the Israelites also gave heed. The celebration commenced on the fourteenth day of the second month; but Hezekiah, fearful that amongst so great a multitude there might be some who had not sufficiently sanctified themselves for the sacred occasion, offered for them the following atoning prayer: "The Good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, even the Lord God of his fathers; although he be not cleansed, according to the purification of the sanctuary." The great concourse of people assembled upon this occasion, rendered this passover the most imposing of any that had been solemnized since the days of king Solomon.

The passover being ended, Hezekiah now resolved that no vestige of idolatry should remain throughout the land. He, therefore, commanded the people to go immediately, and break all the images, burn the groves, and demolish the high places and altars, not only throughout Judah, but also in those parts of the country which belonged to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. He even caused the Brazen Serpent, which Moses had erected as a monument of God's peculiar mercy to the Hebrews in the wilderness, to be destroyed, because the people had often turned it into an object of idolatrous worship.

Having thus restored the worship of Jehovah throughout his dominions, Hezekiah next directed his attention to the recovery of those places which had been taken by the Philistines during the reign of his father. He, therefore, marched an army against them, and, in a short time, not only regained all the cities of Judah which they had seized,

but also dispossessed them of all their own territories, excepting Gath and Gaza. Elated with this success, he now ventured to withhold the yearly tribute which his father had agreed to pay to the Assyrians. Shalmaneser, the son and successor of Tiglath-Pileser, was at this time engaged in the siege of Samaria, and was therefore too much occupied to attend to the affairs of the king of Judah; but in the sixth year of his reign, having subdued the Israelites, and carried the remaining seven tribes away into captivity, he was at leisure to call Hezekiah to account for his arrears of tribute. Death, however, at this critical period, put an end to the Assyrian monarch's career, and his throne was filled by his son Sennacherib.

Sennacherib, immediately after his accession, invaded Judah with an immense host; and as Hezekiah was too weak to attempt to resist so powerful a foe, he sent messengers to Sennacherib, offering to submit to any tribute which he might think proper to impose. Three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, was the sum stipulated; and to pay this large amount, not only emptied the sacred and the royal treasury, but required also the gold which covered the doors and pillars of the Temple. Sennacherib now advanced towards Egypt to invade that kingdom; but reflecting, soon after the commencement of his march, that it would be unsafe to leave unsubdued, behind him, a power so well inclined to ally itself with the Egyptians. he basely directed his course to the southern part of Judah, and having taken many other towns, finally resolved to lay siege to Libnah, and La chish. Thence he sent his general Rabshakeh, against Jerusalem; and the language which he used in summoning Hezekiah to surrender the city was, in the highest degree, offensive and blasphemous. With humble confidence Hezekiah hastened to the Temple, and there

prostrating himself before the Lord, referred the whole matter to his righteous arbitration. God, in answer to the king's prayer, immediately sent the prophet Isaiah to him with the following consoling message: "Thus saith the Lord: Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword, in his own land."

In consequence of this Divine assurance of deliverance, Hezekiah sent no answer to the summons of Rabshakeh, and that general, therefore, returned with his forces to Sennacherib, who was pressing the siege of Libnah. The failure of Rabshakeh's expedition against Jerusalem, so highly enraged the haughty Assyrian monarch, that he resolved at once to lead his whole army against that city; but while he was raising the siege of Libnah for that purpose, he received intelligence that Tirhakah, king of Upper Egypt, was advancing with an immense army, to cut off his retreat to his own country. To counteract the designs of this new enemy Sennacherib, therefore, thought it prudent to abandon, for the time, his operations against Judah; but before he left that country, he sent a boastful and threatening letter to Hezekiah, respecting his future intentions. With this letter Hezekiah immediately repaired to the Temple, and, spreading it out before the Lord, he earnestly cried: "O Lord our God, I beseech thee save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only." In answer to this humble prayer, the Lord immediately sent the prophet Isaiah to the king, with an assurance that the king of Assyria should not so much as come near Jerusalem; "for, saith the Lord, I will defend this city,

to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

In the mean time Sennacherib had met the forces of the king of Egypt, and had routed them with immense slaughter. Flushed with this fresh triumph he returned towards Jerusalem, firmly determined to destroy the city and put all the inhabitants to the sword; but in his way thither, during the very night after the prophet had given Hezekiah the assurance of Divine protection, "the angel of the Lord went out, and smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and eighty-five thousand." This exhibition of Divine vengeance so terrified Sennacherib, that he immediately hastened, with the remainder of his army, home to Nineveh, and was there soon after slain by two of his sons while he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch, the principal idol of the Assyrians. The parricides fled for safety into Armenia, and left Esarhaddon, their younger brother, to succeed to the throne.

While these memorable events were passing in and around Judah, Hezekiah was suddenly prostrated by illness, and was warned by the prophet Isaiah to prepare for death. Upon receiving this startling warning, the king at once turned to "Him with whom belong the issues from death," and in the most fervent manner offered up the following brief supplication: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." This prayer proved so effectual, that the prophet, before he had passed the middle court of the Temple, was directed to return and inform Hezekiah that his prayer had been heard, and his tears witnessed; and that the Almighty had determined to add fifteen years to his life. To assure him, at the same time, that his recovery was, indeed, miraculous, and not "by chance,"

and to give him confidence in the promise, God directed that the shadow upon the sun-dial of Ahaz should go backwards ten degrees.

The fame of this cure, and of the miracle that attended it, extended even to Babylon; and Merodach-baladan, the governor, sent ambassadors to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, to inquire into the attendant miracle, and to form an alliance of friendship with him. Flattered by such an embassy from so distant a quarter, Hezekiah did not, on this occasion, observe his usual discretion; and, therefore, to convince the ambassadors of his importance, and that he was a desirable ally, he made to them a very ostentatious display of his strength and treasures. For indulging in this vain glory, instead of referring all his power and greatness to the Divine protection and favor, the Almighty was displeased with Hezekiah; and the prophet Isaiah was therefore commissioned to humble him with the intimation that the day was not far distant when all the treasures which he and his fathers had laid up, should be spoil for the Babylonians, and when his descendants should be servants in the palace of their king. To this severe admonition Hezekiah meekly replied: "Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken. Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?"

The remainder of Hezekiah's life and reign was passed in peace and prosperity; and his death occurred 696 A. C., when he was in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and thirtieth of his reign. He was buried with great solemnity, in the most honorable place among the sepulchres of the sons of David.

SECTION IV.

MANASSEH :—His Idolatry—His Captivity—His Repentance, and Restoration to his Throne—AMON—JOSIAH—His early Piety, and Reformations throughout his Kingdom—BOOK OF THE LAW discovered, and deposited in the Ark—Josiah's death and burial—JEHOAHAZ—Deposed by Necho, and sent in chains to Egypt—JEHOIAKIM—His Idolatry reproved by JEREMIAH—JEHOIAKIN—Jerusalem taken by Nebuchadnezzar—End of the KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

MANASSEH, the son and successor of the excellent Hezekiah, ascended the throne of Judah when he was only twelve years of age. Though so young, still he must have been familiar with the happy measures pursued by his father; but it was his misfortune to fall into the hands of such guardians and chief ministers as were ill-affected to Hezekiah's reformation. They embraced every opportunity, therefore, to instill into him a strong aversion to it, and to corrupt his mind with the most pernicious principles, both religious and political.

The efforts of the guardians and counsellors of Manasseh proved entirely successful. In the course of a few years, all that had been done by Hezekiah was entirely overthrown; and those abominable practices which had called down the vengeance of Heaven upon the Israelites, were, in every particular, followed by him. He not only worshipped idols, restored high places, and erected altars unto Baal, but even profaned the Temple itself, by taking out the Ark of the Covenant, and putting an idol in its place. These, and other abominations, such as compelling his children to pass through the fire to Moloch, were accompanied by the most cruel persecutions of all who would not follow his wicked apostacy. In the midst of these scenes of violence, Isaiah, the greatest of the prophets, was, by his order, sawn asunder.

These horrid impieties were so offensive to the Almighty that he proclaimed by his prophet, "Because Manasseh,

king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Ammonites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah to sin also with his idols: therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle." Notwithstanding this awful denunciation, Manasseh persisted in following his iniquitous ways until the twenty-second year of his reign, when Esar-haddon, king of Assyria, having overcome Palestine, removed the remnant of the people which still lingered upon the mountains of Israel, and then ordered his generals to march against Jerusalem. Manasseh left the city and advanced with his army to meet the enemy; but being overcome in battle, he was taken prisoner and sent in chains to Babylon, and there cast into a dungeon.

In this deplorable situation, Manasseh soon became sensible of his heinous offenses against God; and with deep humiliation and unfeigned penitence, he, in the most fervent manner, implored the Divine forgiveness. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his prayer, to forgive his sins, and to incline the heart of the successor of Esar-haddon to release him from bondage and restore him to his kingdom.

Conscious that his restoration was attributable exclusively to the Divine favor, Manasseh now made the most strenuous efforts to atone for his former crimes. He repaired and fortified the city of Jerusalem, consecrated the Temple anew, and made it the chief business of his life to manifest his gratitude towards his Divine protector. He was not satisfied with his own personal reformation; but, sensible that his former guilt had been the cause of the miseries which his people had endured, he endeavored, both by his example and his authority, to effect a reformation among them also.

Thus occupied, Manasseh, in peace and prosperity, passed the remainder of a reign of fifty-five years—longer than that of any other king of either Judah or Israel; and at his death, which occurred 643 A. C., he left a flourishing kingdom to his son Amon. The wickedness of the early part of his life deprived him, however, of the honor of being buried in the royal sepulchre; and his remains were, therefore, deposited in a grave made in the garden of Uzzah, adjacent to his dwelling.

Amon, the son of Manasseh, succeeded to the throne in the twenty-third year of his age. Although his entire life had been passed during the penitent and prosperous part of his father's reign, yet in his conduct he imitated the worst and most disastrous. His impieties soon provoked the Almighty to shorten his days; and he, therefore, permitted two of his own domestics to murder him, after a brief reign of two years, 641 A. C. His murderers were, however, punished with death, and he himself was buried by the side of his father, in the garden of Uzzah.

Josiah, the son of Amon, ascended the throne of Judah when only eight years of age. He possessed, naturally, an amiable and virtuous disposition; and as he advanced in years, his wise and judicious conduct excited the universal love and respect of his subjects. He was, at this time, under the guardianship of the high-priest, who bestowed upon him an education worthy of his exalted station.

Josiah had scarcely reached the twelfth year of his age before he gave proof of his piety by commencing the purification of Jerusalem. He extirpated the impious worship of idols, and restored the worship of the true God: he abolished such ordinances of his predecessors as were injurious in their tendencies: such as were expedient, he retained; and he made such improvements in those which

required to be improved, as would have done honor to the most consummate wisdom, and the experience of advanced years.

This reformation in the city was immediately followed by a similar reformation throughout his dominions. To effect this object the more thoroughly, he traversed the whole land, including those territories even, which had belonged to Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and wherever he went, he caused all the groves and altars, and the carved and molten images which his apostate predecessors had dedicated to idolatrous worship, to be destroyed. Even the graves of idolatrous priests were, by his order, opened, and their bones taken out and burnt upon the altars; and all those priests of the Levitical order who had been known to sacrifice, at any time, in the high places, though it were to the true God, were removed from the sacerdotal office.

Having made this general reformation in religion, not only in his own dominions, but in the territories also which formerly belonged to Israel, Josiah, in the eighteenth year of his reign, returned to Jerusalem, repaired the Temple, and put it in complete order. In the course of these labors the original Book of the Law, as written by the hand of Moses, and deposited beside the Ark, was discovered by Hilkiah, the high-priest. From this venerable copy the prophecies of Moses, foretelling the desolation of the land and the destitution of the Temple, were read in the presence of the king. With intense concern Josiah rent his clothes, and sent to the prophetess Huldah to inquire how these things were to be understood. The prophetess confirmed the denunciation, and declared that the threatened evils were near at hand; but, said she, "As for the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him:—Thus saith the Lord God of

Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard: Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God when thou heardst these words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace; neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same."

On receiving this message from the prophetess, Josiah sent orders to the priests, Levites, and people throughout his dominions, to hasten to Jerusalem without delay; and as soon as they were all assembled, he repaired with them to the Temple, where, in the hearing of the whole multitude, he caused the law of God to be distinctly read, and then both he and his people entered into a solemn covenant, strictly to obey every article contained in that sacred book. Sacrifices were then made, and prayers offered up for the Divine blessing, after which the king dismissed the people to their several homes, and he returned to his palace. He soon after made a second tour throughout his dominions, and wherever he found the least vestige of idolatry, he caused it to be immediately removed.

The reformation of religion being now complete, and the worship of Jehovah thoroughly established, Josiah next prepared to celebrate the passover. In this celebration, an exact conformity to the law and ancient usage was observed; and, according to Divine testimony, it was the most solemn passover that had been known since the time of the prophet Samuel. In truth, this excellent prince did everything in his power to atone for the sins of the people, and to appease the wrath of the Almighty; but the Divine decree for the removal of Judah into a land of captivity had irrevocably passed.

The celebration of this great festival had scarcely closed, before Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, requested permission of Josiah to pass through Judah, in order to attack Carchemish, an important pass of the Euphrates. But Josiah, as a tributary of the Assyrians, felt himself bound to oppose his passage; and with this view he led his army to the Valley Megiddo, and there awaited the approach of the Egyptian king. Against this conduct of the king of Judah, the king of Egypt earnestly but vainly expostulated; and a desperate battle, therefore, immediately followed, during which Josiah was mortally wounded and conveyed to Jerusalem, where he soon after died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors. This sad event occurred 610 A. C., and in the thirty-second year of this excellent and lamented prince's reign.

Jehoahaz or Shallum, the second son of Josiah, was anointed king of Judah immediately after his father's death; but his reign was of only three months' duration. He was naturally a very wicked prince, and early indicated his intention of overthrowing all the wise and good regulations of his virtuous predecessor. But his wicked designs were frustrated by Necho, king of Egypt, who, when he returned triumphant from the Euphrates, came to Jerusalem, deposed Jehoahaz, and sent him in chains to Egypt, where he passed the remainder of his days in misery and disgrace. Necho then laid upon Judah an annual tribute of one hundred talents of silver and one of gold, and bestowed the crown upon Josiah's eldest son Eliakim, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim, in token of submission.

Jehoiakim was no sooner seated upon the throne than he began, in imitation of his brother, to overturn the order and discipline which his father had established; and the people, who had never sincerely entered into Josiah's reformation, gladly embraced the present opportunity to indulge

the bent of their depraved inclinations. God, by the prophet Jeremiah, severely admonished both the king and the people for their iniquities; and assured them that, if they persisted in their wicked ways, "he would make the Temple like the house of Shiloh, and the city of Jerusalem a curse to all nations."

The freedom with which Jeremiah delivered this message gave such offense to the priests, that they caused him to be apprehended, brought before the king's council, and tried for his life; but Ahikam, one of the chief lords of the kingdom, interceded so successfully for him, that he obtained his discharge by the general consent of all the princes and the elders of the people then present. Urijah, another prophet commissioned to convey a similar message to the king and the people, was not, however, so favorably treated. To escape from Jehoiakim's rage, he fled into Egypt; but the tyrant's emissaries pursued him thither, and brought him back to Jerusalem, where he was cruelly put to death, and his remains afterwards treated with the greatest indignity.

In the beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, having completed the reduction of Nineveh and the Assyrian empire, resolved to retaliate upon Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, for his invasion of his dominions. He, therefore, marched against him with a powerful army, overcame him in a general battle, and soon re-conquered all the country between the river Euphrates and the Nile. He next besieged and took Jerusalem; and, after plundering the Temple and taking the king prisoner, he returned with him and the spoil to Babylon. The sacred vessels of the Temple he placed in the temple of Belus; but he soon after restored the king to his throne, on condition that he should become his tributary for life. To secure Jehoiakim's fidelity, Nebu-

chadnezzar required as hostages certain members of the royal family, and a number of the nobility; among the latter of whom were the prophet Daniel, and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, afterwards known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

An incident preceded the taking of Jerusalem which deserves a passing notice. As the Babylonian army approached the city, the Rechabites, a tribe of Midianites, who dwelt in tents, apprehending themselves in danger in the open country, fled into the capital for safety. Though they conformed in many respects to the laws of Moses, yet they had not been admitted as proselytes, and were not, therefore, entitled to attend the services of the Temple. These people the prophet Jeremiah, in accordance with the command of God, conducted to the Temple, and there, in the presence of the people, offered them wine to drink. This they at once refused, assigning as a reason, that it would be a violation of an institution of Rechab, their founder. The prophet, after commending their fidelity and obedience, turned to the Hebrews who were present, and bitterly reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of His laws than the poor Rechabites were of one of the injunctions of their ancestor.

This forcible illustration of their perverse and wicked character, had no effect upon either king or people; and the prophet was, therefore, directed to tell them plainly, that if they did not repent and change their ways, God would again bring Nebuchadnezzar against Judah and Jerusalem, cause him to lay waste the country, and carry the people away captives to Babylon. This fearful denunciation only enraged Jehoiakim and his subjects against the prophet; and Jeremiah was, therefore, compelled to conceal himself, for some time, to escape their vengeance. The wicked king, however, though restrained from injuring

the prophet himself, impiously burned the book of his prophecies in the presence of his court.

The day of awful retribution against Jehoiakim and his house was now, however, at hand. He had, for some years, regularly paid the tribute levied upon him by Nebuchadnezzar; but he at length determined to throw off the yoke; and to enable himself to do this the more effectually, he entered into a close alliance with Necho, king of Egypt, the open enemy of the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was, at this time, in the north of Syria; and being there informed of the revolt and new alliance of Jehoiakim, he sent a number of his auxiliaries against him. To these forces Jehoiakim made a strong resistance, but he was at length taken prisoner, put to death, and his body thrown into the highway, not being allowed even common burial. Thus perished this wicked prince, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and the twelfth of his reign, 598 A. C.

Jehoiakin, or Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, was raised to the throne on the death of his father; but in a brief reign of three months his incorrigible impiety drew upon him the bitterest denunciations of Divine wrath. At the expiration of that time Nebuchadnezzar led his army in person against Jerusalem, and beseiged the city on every side. This so terrified Jehoiakin, that, without making the least resistance, he delivered himself, his princes, the chief ministers of state, and even his own mother, up to Nebuchadnezzar, who sent the whole party prisoners to Babylon. He took with him, also, on his own return to his capital, ten thousand other captives, among whom were the chief artisans, the men of valor of the country, and Ezekiel, the prophet. Over the poor citizens left in Jerusalem he placed Mattaniah, the third son of Josiah, as king; and exacted from him a most solemn oath to be

faithful in his allegiance to the king of Babylon. To make this oath the more impressive, he, at the same time, changed his name to that of Zedekiah, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies *the Justice of the Lord.*

Zedekiah was now firmly seated on the throne of his ancestors, though with a greatly impoverished kingdom; for all the movable wealth that could be found, either in the palace or the Temple, had been seized and sent to Babylon. In the fourth year of his reign, the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Tyre, invited him to join them in a confederacy to shake off the Babylonish yoke; but the remembrance of his solemn oath of allegiance prevented him from listening to their proposals. Happy would it have been had he as carefully observed his allegiance to the Divine King; but instead of that, he daily practiced the most revolting impieties, notwithstanding the wretched fate of all his wicked predecessors must have been familiar to him. The vicious example of their king was followed with the utmost avidity by his depraved subjects; and thus they were together rapidly ripening for the destruction which had been so long foretold, and which now so speedily awaited them.

In the ninth year of his reign, Zedekiah resolved to revolt from the king of Babylon and ally himself to Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt. This revolt and alliance was the immediate cause of all the disasters that followed, both to Judah and Jerusalem. Against it the prophet Jeremiah earnestly remonstrated, and repeatedly, though exposed to the most cruel treatment, warned both the king and the people, that their only hope of peace and safety lay in a close adherence to Nebuchadnezzar.

Intelligence of this revolt no sooner reached Nebuchadnezzar than he resolved effectually to suppress it. With this view he marched into the land of Judah with a vast

army, and after taking many of the principal cities, laid seige to Jerusalem. The siege was vigorously conducted for some time, and with every prospect of success; but in the beginning of the following year the Egyptians went to the assistance of their allies; and by this circumstance Nebuchadnezzar was, for a short time, diverted from his purpose. The alacrity, however, with which he raised the siege, and advanced to give them battle, so greatly intimidated the Egyptians, that they immediately returned to their own country, and left Zedekiah and his subjects to their fate. The siege of Jerusalem was now renewed, and prosecuted with redoubled vigor; and at length the city was taken by storm, at midnight, after having borne, with desperate valor, a siege of eighteen months. The carnage which followed was dreadful beyond description. The people, of all ages, were slaughtered wherever they were found. The Temple itself, even to its sacred courts, streamed with blood. In the midst of the confusion, Zedekiah, with his family and some of the members of his court, effected his escape from the city; but he was pursued, and captured in the plains of Jericho, and sent in chains to Nebuchadnezzar, who had left the conclusion of the war to his generals, and was then at Riblah, in Syria. After severely upbraiding him for his ungrateful conduct, the conqueror ordered all his sons to be slain in his presence, and then his own eyes to be put out, that the slaughter of his children might be the last sight on which his tortured memory might dwell. Thus ended the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the house of David, eleven years after he was placed upon the throne, and 587 A. C. He was afterwards sent in fetters of brass to Babylon, and there remained until his death.

Nebuchadnezzar soon after sent Nebuzaradan, one of his principal officers, with a large army, to complete the

desolation of both Judah and Jerusalem. The city and the Temple were burned to the ground; the gold and silver which former spoilers had left, was collected and sent to Babylon, and the people still remaining in the country were also transported thither, excepting the poor of the land, who were left behind as vine-dressers and husbandmen. Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of four years, again entered Judah, and gleaned a few more of the miserable inhabitants, whom he sent to join their brethren in captivity.

Thus ended the kingdom of Judah, and the sovereignty of the house of David, four hundred and sixty-eight years after David himself commenced his reign—three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten tribes—and one hundred and thirty-four years from the extinction of the kingdom of Israel. It is a remarkable circumstance, and shows how manifestly the supervision of Divine Providence extended over all these melancholy events, that the king of Babylon made no attempt to colonize Judah as the Assyrians had Israel, but left the land vacant, that it might thus be ready to be re-occupied by the returning Hebrews, after their captivity and punishment for seventy years, should be brought to a close.

THE EAST.

1095 Saul.

1075

1050

1025 Hiram.

1000 Rezon (Syria).

975

Sheshonk (Eg.).

950

925 Ethbaal.

Jezebel.

900 Ben-hadad.

875

850

Dido.

825

800

Pul (Assyria).

775

Tiglath-pileser.

750

Shalmaneser.

725 Sargon takes Samaria, and puts an end to the Kingdom of Israel (719).

700 Sennacherib.

Tirhaka (Egypt).

Essarhaddon.

675

Asshur-bani-pal.

650

Asshur-emid-ilin.

625

Necho (Egypt).

606 Nebuchadnezzar (606) takes Jerusalem, and puts an end to the Kingdom of Judah.

THE HEBREW MONARCHY.

SAUL KING—1095 B.C.

KINGDOM. UNITED

1095. SAUL. 1055. (Zadok.)

1055. DAVID. 1015. (Ahimaaz.)

1015. SOLOMON. 975. (Azariah.)

(999) (Johanan.)

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED.

	Jeroboam.	Azariah. Amariah.	Rehoboam.
	Nadab (957). Baasha. Elah. Zimri.	Elijah. Elisha.	Abijam. Asa (959).
I	Omri.		
	Ahab (919).		Jehoshaphat (918).
S	Ahaziah.	(888)	
	Jehoram. Jehu (884).		Jehoram. Ahaziah (885). Athaliah.
R	Jehoahaz (855).	Jonah. Amos. Hosea. Ahitub. Zadok.	Jehoash (878).
A	Jehoash (841).		J
	Jeroboam II. (825).		Amaziah (838).
EL			U
	Interregnum.		Uzziah (809).
	Zachariah. Shallum.	(777)	D
	Menahem.	Isaiah. Joel. Micah. Nahum. Zephaniah. Shallum. Hilkiah.	Jotham (757).
	Pekahiah. Pekah.		A
	Interregnum. Hoshea (728).		Ahaz (741).
			Hezekiah.
			H
		(666)	Manasseh.
		Azariah.	
			Amon (642).
			Josiah (640).
			Jehoahaz. Jehoiakim.

THE WEST.

1095 Temenus, and return of the Heraclidæ (1104).

1075

Codrus (1065).

1050

Ionic Migration (1044).

1025

1000 HOMER.

975

950 Dark Age (Greece).

925

900 Hesiod. Lycurgus.

875

Carthage (founded).

850

825 Dawn of History (Greece).

800

775 Arctinus.

Rome founded (753).

750 Romulus (753).

725 Numa (715).

700

675 Tullus Hostillius (672).

650 Simonides. Ancus Marcius (640).

625 Tarquin I. (616).

606 Sappho.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION.

SECTION I.

Fall of Jerusalem—GEDALIAH Governor of Judæa—Insurrection of Ishmael—Removal of the People into Egypt—DANIEL, the Prophet, in Babylon—Nebuchadnezzar's Dream—Its Interpretation by Daniel—Daniel's Exaltation—His Faithfulness and Integrity—The Warning of the King of Babylon by the Hand-writing on the Wall—The Decree of Cyrus permitting the Israelites to return to Judæa.

WHEN Nebuchadnezzar, after the destruction of Jerusalem, retired from Judæa, he left Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, governor of the country. Gedaliah immediately took up his residence at Mizpah, east of the Jordan, and was soon after joined by the prophet Jeremiah, whom he treated with the utmost respect and reverence.

As soon as the position in which Gedaliah had been left by the Assyrians, became known to those Jews who had escaped from Jerusalem during the siege, they resorted to him at Mizpah, and placed themselves under his protection. Among these were Ishmael, of the royal family of David, Johanan, and many others, who, before the destruction of the city, had held important positions in the army. They were all received by the governor with the utmost respect, and advised by him to remain in Judæa as subjects of the king of Babylon. To induce them to adopt this course, he allowed them to select their own places of residence, and offered them the assistance of his followers to fit up their dwellings. With these kind proposals they all seem-

ed entirely satisfied, and expressed their apparent gratitude to Gedaliah in the warmest terms.

Ishmael's design, however, in repairing to Mizpah, was to murder the governor and make himself king of Judæa. In this horrid scheme he was assisted by Baalis, king of the Ammonites, by whom he had been protected during the siege of Jerusalem. A grand entertainment, given by Gedaliah to all the distinguished men then at Mizpah, afforded the traitor a favorable opportunity for effecting his base and wicked purpose. In the midst of the banquet he and his accomplices rose from the table, fell upon Gedaliah and the rest of the company, and put them all to the sword. He then took possession of Mizpah, put all the inhabitants who offered any resistance to death, and made the rest prisoners. Perceiving, however, that these horrid massacres rendered it unsafe for him to remain at Mizpah, he left that place, and taking with him his captives, proceeded towards the land of the Ammonites, to place himself under the protection of Baalis, their king. In the mean time Johanan and other leading men of Judah, who had remained faithful to Gedaliah, hastily brought together such forces as they could obtain, marched in pursuit of Ishmael, and overtook him at the fountain of Gibeon. When Johanan was observed by the captives to be the leader of their pursuers, they immediately rushed to him and left Ishmael with only eight followers, with whom he succeeded in escaping to the king of Ammon.

The death of Gedaliah, and the flight of Ishmael, left the people under the care of Johanan and his associates; and these leaders, fearing that the Chaldeans would return and call them to an account for what had passed, retired to Chimham, that they might thence, in case of necessity, escape into Egypt. Jeremiah, as one of the captives that had been taken by Ishmael from Mizpah, accompanied

them thither; and, soon after their arrival, Johanan and the other princes of the people desired the prophet to consult the Lord respecting their intended migration into Egypt, assuring him that they would implicitly follow his directions. Jeremiah complied with their request; and at the expiration of ten days he called together, not only the leaders, but also the whole multitude of the people, and informed them that if they remained in Judæa the Almighty would protect them and build them up; "but if they set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, they shall die by the sword, by famine, and by the pestilence."

They were all, however, both leaders and people, resolved to go into Egypt; and, disregarding the message, therefore, which the prophet had delivered to them, they departed from Chimham and settled in Migdol, Daphne, Memphis, and Thebes. In these places they were no sooner established, than they gave themselves up wholly to idolatry, worshipping the moon and other false deities of the Egyptians. Against this impiety Jeremiah earnestly remonstrated, but without effect; and God, therefore, ordered the prophet to denounce, in the most emphatic terms, the severest judgments upon them, and to tell them explicitly, that the king of Egypt, in whose protection they trusted, should soon be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, as Zedekiah, their own king, had so recently been. The abandoned Hebrews paid not the least attention, however, to these awful denunciations, but persisted in their impieties, until the prediction of the prophet was strictly fulfilled. This occurred in 570 A. C., when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt, overran the whole country, and carried all the Hebrews who escaped the sword captives to Babylon. The fate of Jeremiah himself is uncertain, though tradition informs us that he had been

previously stoned to death by his infatuated countrymen. From this time the name of Hebrew is lost in that of Jew.

Thus, eighteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, was the captivity of the Jews rendered complete, and the whole nation transferred to Chaldæa. The great purposes for which they had been set apart from other nations, as a peculiar people, had not, however, failed. They were still destined to be the depositaries of the designs of the Almighty towards the human race, and to preserve in the world the knowledge of the true God. Many of them, therefore, soon after they became settled in the land of their exile, rose to positions of very considerable importance, and were regarded, not as prisoners, but as useful emigrants. After their captivity had continued a few years, they appear to have experienced no other inconveniences than such as naturally arose from the recollections of their own pleasant land—from their position as foreigners in a strange country—from the derision of Chaldeans at the peculiarities of their religion; and, perhaps, from a distinctive, personal tax, from which the natives of the country were free.

The prophet DANIEL, from whose history we derive the principal part of our knowledge of the condition of the Jews during their captivity, was one of those early exiles of noble family, who were carried to Babylon as hostages for the fidelity of king Jehoiakim. Soon after their arrival in that city, he and a number of his young associates were placed under the care of the chief eunuch, to be thoroughly instructed in the language and learning of the Chaldæans, that they might thus become prepared for positions in the king's palace, and employments at court. These instructions were continued for three years, at the expiration of which the young men were all examined in the presence

of the king; when Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were found to have made so much greater progress in learning than their associates, that they were immediately enrolled among the magicians, or wise men.

After Daniel and his three associates had been a few years at court, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which made a profound impression upon his mind, and which greatly troubled him, because he could not, when he awoke, recall any of the particulars of it to his memory. As great importance was attached to dreams in those days, and as men skilled in the sciences were supposed to be able to discern their meaning, therefore, the king sent for his chief magicians, and required them not only to interpret his dream, but to discern the dream itself, which he, unfortunately, had forgotten. The magicians replied, that they could readily give the interpretation if they knew the dream; but to tell the dream itself was impossible. This answer so exasperated the king, that he ordered all the wise men to be immediately put to death. As Daniel and his friends, though not present, were included in this order, he repaired to Arioch, the captain of the king's guards, and requested of the king, through that officer, a brief respite of the sentence. The king readily granted the request; and the Lord, at the earnest prayer of Daniel and his friends, revealed the secret to him.

Nebuchadnezzar, in his dream, had seen a colossal image, with a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and toes partly iron and partly clay, struck down by a stone, cut, apparently without hands, from the mountain, which itself grew and filled the whole earth. This, according to the interpretation of Daniel, figured forth "the things to come;" describing, by characteristic symbols, the succession of empires to the

end of time. With the revelation of the dream and its interpretation, the king was not only satisfied, but astonished; and, presenting himself before Daniel, he exclaimed, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." Nebuchadnezzar, at the same time, raised Daniel to the eminent station of Archimagus, or chief of the magicians and governors of the province of Babylon. Daniel's three friends, also, were, at his request, promoted to places of honor and importance.

The miraculous development and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream produced, however, no lasting impression upon his mind, of an overruling Providence; and he, therefore, soon after set up a colossal image of gold in the plains of Dura, near Babylon; and commanded that, at the sound of music, every one should worship it on pain of death. He soon learned that this command was utterly disregarded by Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; and the idea of disobedience in persons of their high stations, so enraged him, that he ordered them to be at once cast into "the burning furnace." The heat of the furnace was so great as to destroy the men that cast them in; but they themselves remained unhurt, not even a hair of their head being singed, nor their clothes scorched. The king now approached, and commanded them to come forth out of the furnace; and when he saw that they were uninjured, the prodigy so deeply affected him, that he publicly acknowledged the supremacy of the God whom they served.

The character of Nebuchadnezzar was marked by many excellent qualities; but so inordinate was the pride with which he contemplated the grandeur of his empire, and the greatness of his enterprises, that he required to be taught that "the Most High ruleth over all the kingdoms of the

earth, and giveth them to whomsoever he will." Of this important fact he was warned in a dream, which Daniel interpreted; but neglecting the warning, "his heart was changed from man's, and a beast's heart was given him." He was soon after afflicted with an insanity which caused him to imagine himself a beast; and, acting under the influence of this idea, he remained constantly abroad in the fields, and lived upon wild herbs. In this debased and forlorn condition, the mighty conqueror remained seven years, at the end of which he was restored to his throne; and after his restoration, one of his first acts was to issue a proclamation, humbly acknowledging the signs and wonders which the Most High God had wrought towards him, and declaring his conviction, that "those who walk in pride he is able to abase." He died soon after, in 561 A. C., and was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach.

Evil-Merodach had administered the government during his father's insanity, and was, therefore, well acquainted with state affairs. Soon after his accession he released Jehoiakim, the captive king of Judah, from the prison in which he had been confined for thirty-seven years, and promoted him to great honors in his palace. The reign of this prince was, however, of short duration; for, after he had been on the throne only three years, he was treacherously murdered by some of the members of his own family.

Neriglissor, the brother-in-law of Evil-Merodach, succeeded him; and no sooner was he seated on the throne, than he led a large army against the Medes and Persians, who had recently became a most formidable enemy to the Babylonians. Cyaxares, king of the Medes, being aware of the movements of the king of Babylon, called in the aid of his nephew Cyrus, an eminent Persian prince, who,

at the head of thirty thousand Persian troops, immediately marched to his assistance. The combined army was placed under the command of Cyrus, who at once advanced to give Neriglissor battle. In the action that followed the Babylonians were completely routed, the king and many of his army slain, and the rest compelled to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

Laborosoarchad, the son of Neriglissor, next occupied the throne. This prince was naturally inclined to all manner of cruelty and injustice, in consequence of which, he soon became so odious to his own subjects, that they conspired against him, and at the end of a brief reign of nine months, put him to death.

Belshazzar, the grand-son of Nebuchadnezzar, next became king of Babylon. In the first year of his reign Daniel had his vision of the four beasts, respecting the four empires of the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; and in the third year, he had the remarkable vision of the ram and he-goat; by the latter of which was signified Alexander the Great, and by the former, Darius Codomannus. Towards the close of his reign Belshazzar gave a magnificent feast to his courtiers and nobles. The conversation of the assembled dignitaries turned upon their gods, whose power had proved so much greater than that of the gods of other nations; and this suggested to the king the idea of sending for the sacred vessels which his grand-father Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the Temple of Jerusalem, and of using them as wine-cups in their riotings. While thus profanely engaged, their attention was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a mysterious hand tracing upon the wall, characters which none of them could understand. In their alarm, they called in the magicians, but the mystery was beyond their power of interpretation. At length Daniel was sent

for; and he, after solemnly rebuking the king for his profanation of that Great Name which his grand-father had been compelled to honor, explained the terrible purport of the inscription to be, that the end of both his life and his dynasty was at hand. Belshazzar lost his life that very night by the conspiracy of two of his nobles, whom he had grievously wronged; and in the following year Cyaxares,* or, as he is called in Scripture, Darius the Mede, took possession of the kingdom. Thus the Babylonian empire was merged in that of the Medes and Persians, 553 A. C.

Darius, immediately after he ascended the throne, divided the empire into one hundred and twenty provinces; and, through respect to Daniel's integrity and learning, he placed him at the head of the governors and princes who presided over them. This expression of superior confidence in the prophet, excited the envy and hatred of the rest; and they determined, therefore, to effect his destruction. His uprightness and integrity, however, both in public and private life, shielded him from all open attack; and they, therefore, resolved to have recourse to his religion. With this view they persuaded the weak old king to issue a decree prohibiting any one, for the space of thirty days, to offer petition or prayer to any god or man but himself, under penalty of being cast alive into the den of lions. Daniel, though fully aware of the object of this decree, still continued to pray three times a day to the God of Israel, with his windows open, and his face turned towards Jerusalem. He was, therefore, at once accused to the king of disobedience to the royal decree; and Darius now saw the folly into which he had been drawn, and would gladly have spared his faithful friend. But being reminded that among the Medes and Persians a royal decree could not be revoked or altered, he reluctantly consented that his own should be carried into effect. Daniel

* Darius is sometimes called Cyaxares in Xenophon.

was, accordingly, delivered into the hands of his enemies, and cast into the den of lions.

The unhappy king, meantime, retired to his palace, and there passed the night in the deepest sorrow, but not without a glimmering hope that the God whom the prophet had served so faithfully, would still deliver him. Early in the following morning he hastened to the den, and in the most plaintive tones called to Daniel, saying, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" To this earnest inquiry the prophet, from within the den, cheerfully replied, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." The joy of Darius at finding one whom he so highly valued thus miraculously preserved, was without limit; and ordering Daniel to be immediately taken out of the den, he commanded that his accusers should all be thrown into it. This was done, and the lions instantly seized and devoured them.

The manifest providence of God in the preservation of Daniel, produced so deep an impression upon the mind of Darius, that he immediately issued the following decree throughout all his dominions:—"Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree that in every kingdom of my dominion, men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."

The death of Darius the Mede occurred in 551 A. C., two years after he ascended the throne of Babylon; and as his successor, the illustrious Cyrus, was, at that time, engaged in distant wars, the kingdom was usurped by Nabo-

nadius, a Babylonian nobleman. Having, however, at length subdued all his western enemies, including even Crœsus, king of Lydia, Cyrus returned to the East, and led his troops against the mighty city. Babylon held out for two years against him, and was then taken by the remarkable stratagem of diverting the course of the river Euphrates, which flowed through the city, and entering by night through the dry channel. This recovery of Babylon from Nabonadius, with all the circumstances attending it, had been minutely described by the prophet Isaiah, and Cyrus mentioned by name, more than a century before that conqueror was born.

The prophet Daniel, though very old, was still living when Babylon, in 536 A. C., was re-taken by Cyrus; and there is every reason to believe that he was highly esteemed, and even venerated, by the conquerer. As Cyrus, in some of his decrees, intimates his knowledge of those prophecies in Isaiah which speak of himself, Daniel had, doubtless, directed his attention to them; and as the prophet had previously ascertained from the prophecies of Jeremiah, that the captivity was to continue seventy years, he now found that the expiration of that period left the sovereign power in the hands of Cyrus, of whom Isaiah has so particularly prophesied as the person designed "to restore the captivity of Judah." He therefore communicated these facts to Cyrus; and as the communication was accompanied by the claim that the God whom the Hebrews worshipped was the same Almighty Being who had raised him up, and had given him all the greatness and glory by which he was surrounded, it must have made a deep impression upon the conquerer's mind.

Animated by this impression, Cyrus immediately issued a decree in which, after acknowledging the supremacy of Jehovah, and that to Him he was indebted for all his king-

doms, he gave full permission to the Jews, throughout his dominions, to return to their own land, and to rebuild the city and Temple of Jerusalem. This happy intelligence was no sooner circulated, than the members of the later captivity—those of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi—repaired from their different abodes, in large numbers, to Babylon—some to make preparations for their journey, and others, who did not design to return themselves, to assist those that intended to go. The great majority of the existing race had been born in Chaldæa, and had there established themselves in family relations, and surrounded themselves by associations and comforts, which they were not willing to abandon. Hence, only a zealous minority were disposed to avail themselves of the decree in their favor; and in the opinion of the Jews themselves, the more illustrious portion of their nation never returned to their own land.

SECTION II.

The Jews conducted back to Jerusalem by Zerubbabel and Jeshua—Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles on the Site of Jerusalem, and prepare to rebuild the Temple—Opposed by the Samaritans—The Temple completed—Commission of Ezra—His Improvements and Administration—The Plot of Haman—Its Discovery, and the Exaltation of Mordecai—Commission of Nehemiah—Close of the History of the Old Testament.

The arrangement for the return of the Jews from their captivity being completed, they left Babylon in the month of March, 535 A. C., under the guidance of Zerubbabel, the grandson of king Jehoiakin, and Jeshua, a grandson of Jozedech, who was high-priest when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The returning exiles numbered forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides

THE WEST.

Anaximander b.

606 SAPPHO (flourish'd)

THALES AND THE SEVEN SAGES.

LAWS OF SOLON (594).

ANACHARSIS.

590

PERIANDER (d. 586).

580 PYTHAGORAS (b. 58-).

SERVIUS TULLIUS (578).

ÆSOP (fl.)

570 PHALARIS.

Anacreon (b. 550).

FIRST COMEDY (Greece, 562).

560 PISISTRATUS (560).

Simonides (b. 556).

550 Ibycus (fl.)

Anaximenes (fl.)

Corinthian Order.

540 CADMUS (Hist.)

536 FIRST TRAGEDY (Greece, 535).

THE HEBREWS IN BABYLON.

Nebuchadnezzar takes Jerusalem.

606. DANIEL and others taken captive to Babylon.

JEHOIACHIN (599).

599. JERUSALEM taken a second time, and ZEDEKIAH made King.

(SERAIAH.)

Rebellion of Zedekiah (593).

Prophecies of Jeremiah.

JERUSALEM destroyed (587).

(JEHOZADACK.)

THE PREDICTIONS OF EZEKIEL.

JEREMIAH (d. 577)

Image of Nebuchadnezzar and his Dreams.

The insanity and recovery of Nebuchadnezzar

THE VISIONS (555.) OF DANIEL.

537. DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN.

538. The Hand-writing upon the wall, and Fall of Babylon.

536. Decree of Cyrus.

RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

In 606 B.C. Babylon, the Lion of Daniel's Vision, subdued the Kingdom of Judah, and carried the people into captivity, where they remained seventy years. In 536 B.C. they were allowed by Cyrus to return to their native country.

During this period there were four prominent Oriental Monarchies,—LYDIA, MEDIA, BABYLON, and EGYPT,—Babylon being the most powerful, and extending from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea.

JEREMIAH. HABAK — *THE* — KUK. DANIEL. — *HEBREW* — OBADIAH. — *PROPHETS.* — EZEKIEL.

ADDI. MELCHI. — *LINE* — NERI. — *OF* — SALATHIEL. — *DAVID.* — ZERUBBABEL.

THE EAST.

NECHO (Egypt). 606

CARCHEMISH (b. 606).

PSAMIS (Egypt).

CYAXARES (Med.).

ALYATTES (Lyd.). 600

CYRUS (b. 599).

ASTYAGES (594).

590

BABYLON, MEDIA, LYDIA, EGYPT, are prominent monarchies (625-555).

580

Tyre taken (572).

AMASIS (Egypt). 570

Evil-merodack (563).

CONFUCIUS.

CRŒSUS (560). 560

NERIGLISSAR (559).

Conquest of Media by Cyrus.

LABOROSOARCHOD (556).

LABYNETUS. 550

BELSHAZZAR (555-538).

Conquest of Lydia by Cyrus (546).

ZOROASTER.

540

Babylon taken by Cyrus (538).

EDICT OF CYRUS. 536

seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven male and female servants, and more than eight thousand beasts of burthen.

Before the exiles departed from Babylon, Cyrus caused all the sacred vessels which had been carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to be given up to them, that they might again be employed in the service of the sanctuary. Zerubbabel was also entrusted with large contributions from the Jews who still remained in Chaldæa, towards the expense of rebuilding the Temple. On reaching the land of Judæa, the whole company repaired at once to the site of Jerusalem; and finding the place utterly desolate, they raised, by voluntary contribution, a large sum towards rebuilding the Temple. They then separated, according to their families and tribes, and secured for themselves such comforts and conveniences as their circumstances required.

Having rebuilt many cities that had been destroyed, and cultivated the waste lands around them, the people all repaired, in the latter part of the following September, to Jerusalem, and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, offering their sacrifices on an altar erected on the ruins of the Temple. They then applied themselves with such zeal to preparing for the restoration of that edifice, that, within a year from their departure from Babylon, the foundations of the second Temple were laid amidst songs of rejoicing and thanksgiving. As the work advanced, the Samaritans manifested a desire to assist in it, and to claim a community of worship in the new Temple; but any association with them was declined by the Jews, on the ground that the decree of the Persian king extended only to the race of Israel. This so incensed the Samaritans, that they resolved to thwart, if possible, the whole undertaking; and as they could not openly rebel against the plain decree of

Cyrus, they resorted to an unscrupulous use of their money and influence among the officers of the government; and in this manner they raised such obstructions that the people became discouraged, and the work, for some time, proceeded slowly, and was at length suspended altogether. The conduct of the Samaritans upon this occasion was the chief cause of the enmity which ever after existed between them and the Jews.

The suspension of the rebuilding of the Temple extended from the latter part of the reign of Cyrus, through the reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis, to the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes. In this long interval the people gradually became indifferent to the work, and were inclined to conclude that the appointed time for its execution had not yet arrived. From this lethargy they were at length aroused by the prophet Haggai, and the building was resumed with fresh zeal. This zeal was, indeed, somewhat damped by the discouraging regrets of the old men who had seen, in their youth, the Temple of Solomon, and who clearly perceived that this would be a far inferior building. Its inferiority was not, however, the principal cause of their grief, for *that* they could have borne; but the Ark of the Covenant, with the mercy seat which was in it, the holy fire upon the altar, the Urim and Thummim, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Shechinah, or Cloud of the Divine Presence—these glories of the former Temple—were irrecoverably lost. But to remove these discouragements, the prophet Haggai was commissioned to inform them that the ultimate glory of this second Temple should far exceed that of the first—not by greater splendor of structure, but by the presence within its walls of the MESSIAH, so long foretold and expected, as "the desire of all nations."

The renewal of the work roused afresh the opposition of the Samaritans, who represented to Tatnai, the Per-

sian governor of Syria, that the Jews were erecting the Temple without authority, and if they were permitted to continue the work, the result would be very prejudicial to the king. These representations induced Tatnai to repair to Jerusalem and inquire of Zerubbabel, the governor, and of the elders of the people, by what authority they were erecting the Temple. Zerubbabel replied that all their proceedings were sanctioned by the decree of Cyrus; upon which Tatnai immediately wrote to the king, informing him of all that had passed between himself and the elders of the Jews, and requesting specific directions for his future conduct towards them. Darius no sooner received this communication, than he ordered search to be made for the decree of Cyrus upon which the Jews based their proceedings. The decree was soon discovered, and it was found, on examination, not only to authorize the erection of the Temple, but to direct the local government to afford such assistance and support as the Jews might require. These the Jews had not ventured to ask; but the orders of Darius, which immediately followed, commanded that they should be given. Under the impulse thus imparted to it, the work proceeded with spirit; and at the expiration of four years, the Temple was completed. The dedication took place in 516 A. C., and was attended with great solemnity and rejoicing. The old ritual service was resumed at the following Passover.

The Jews, after the rebuilding of the Temple, enjoyed thirty-one years of repose under the protection of Darius Hystaspes; and at his death, which occurred in 485 A. C., he was succeeded by his son Xerxes, the Ahazuerus of Scripture, who, notwithstanding the frequent attempts of the Samaritans to prejudice his mind against the Jews, seems to have treated them with equal kindness. Xerxes, after a reign of twenty-one years, was succeeded, in 464 A. C.,

by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, and during his long reign several circumstances of great interest to the Jewish people occurred.

Among these circumstances, the most important was the determination of the Jews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem on a regular plan, and to surround it with strong walls. This no sooner became known to the Samaritans and other surrounding nations, than they resolved to prevent, if possible, its execution. With this view they represented to the Persian government that its western dominions would be endangered by the fortification of a city noted, in times past, for its turbulent character, as well as for the power of its former kings. These representations produced the designed effect; and hence, orders were issued from the king, prohibiting the surrounding of the city with walls, as proposed. Artaxerxes soon after, however, learned the true position and character of the Jewish people, and the favorable sentiments of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes towards them, as manifested in the conduct and edicts of those princes. He learned, also, the veneration with which the God of the Hebrews had been regarded by the most eminent of his predecessors. All this is manifested in the terms of the commission, by which, in the seventh year of his reign, Ezra, the priest and scribe, was authorized to proceed to Jerusalem, to set in order whatever related to the service and worship of Jehovah. The Persian king seems still, however, to have had some fears of the future strength of the Jews; for Ezra, with all his powers, was not permitted to rebuild the walls of the city.

The commission with which Ezra was invested had, at this time, become indispensably necessary to the Jewish nation; for, after the death of the first leaders of the restoration, Zerubbabel, the governor, Jeshua, the high-priest,

and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the state, both in the civil and ecclesiastical departments, remained, for many years, in the most unsettled condition. Besides its extent, the terms of Ezra's commission were so exactly applicable to the circumstances of the Jewish people, as to suggest the idea that it was procured from the king by some of the influential Jews who still remained in Chaldæa. Ezra was authorized, as governor, to appoint superior and inferior judges, to correct abuses, to enforce the observance of the law, and to punish the refractory with fines, imprisonment, and even death, should their offenses require it. Such of the Jews as were thus inclined, were invited to accompany Ezra; and from those who preferred to remain in Chaldæa, he was authorized to collect contributions for the use of the Temple. To the fund thus raised the king and his council liberally contributed; and the officers of the royal revenues in Syria and other western provinces, were directed to furnish Ezra with as much silver, wheat, wine, oil, and salt, as might be required to sustain the sacrifices and offerings of the Temple without interruption. This liberality towards the Jews, is supposed to have arisen from a desire to avert from the king and his sons the wrath of their God, whom the Persians evidently held in the highest honor.

Preparations for the departure of Ezra and his followers being completed, they assembled on the banks of the river Ahava, near Babylon, designing thence to commence their journey. The Levitical tribe had hitherto manifested little inclination to leave their eastern home and return to Judæa; and as, in order to sustain the priesthood, their presence in Jerusalem was indispensably necessary, Ezra obtained from the king an exemption from taxes of all who would return and engage in the service of the Temple. By this means he succeeded in inducing some of the

priestly families to accompany him. About six thousand persons in all, comprising seventeen hundred and fifty-four men, and the rest, women and children, set out with Ezra on their journey; and as the wilderness through which their march would lead them was infested with predatory Arab tribes, the whole party, in solemn fasting and prayer, cast themselves upon the care of the Almighty. God rewarded their confidence by extending over them his protecting care; and at the expiration of four months, they all arrived at Jerusalem in safety.

Having deposited in the Temple the donations with which he had been intrusted, and made known his commission to the governors of the surrounding provinces, Ezra earnestly applied himself to the work of reformation. He first removed all the foreign and idolatrous women whom many of the people, and even of the priests and Levites, had married, contrary to the law, and then caused the law to be publicly read and explained by interpreters, to those who understood only the Chaldæac dialect in which they had been brought up. This necessarily required a great increase of copies of the law, and it is generally believed that Ezra, at this time, collected and revised the sacred books which compose the Old Testament, and arranged them in the form in which they now appear.

While Ezra was engaged in these labors of reformation in Judæa, the Jews who still remained in Chaldæa were in imminent peril of a general massacre. In the third year of his reign, Artaxerxes, the Persian monarch, had put away, for an act of disobedience, his queen Vashti, and had taken in her place a beautiful Jewish damsel named Esther, the niece of Mordecai, a Benjamite, and one of the officers of the palace. After some years, the chief place in the king's favor was obtained by Haman, an Amalekite; and to him the king required that all his servants, and even officers,

should bow in that peculiar manner by which the Persians testified the highest respect. Mordecai, instead of observing this act of homage, would suffer Haman to pass by without any of those marks of respect which others constantly paid to him. This naturally attracted the attention and excited the inquiries of Haman; and upon hearing that Mordecai was a Jew, he resolved to resent the insult, by bringing about, not only the destruction of the offender himself, but also that of the whole race to which he belonged.

A measure so desperate as that which Haman now contemplated, required the utmost caution; and, therefore, having first fixed, by lot, a propitious day for its execution, he repaired to the king, and, by representing to him in general terms, that there was a people scattered throughout his dominions of peculiar customs, of offensive manners, and of refractory and rebellious dispositions, he obtained from him an order for their extermination. This order was no sooner received than couriers were sent to all the provinces, directing that the Jews, without regard to age or sex, should be entirely extirpated, on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and their property taken as a prey. When this became known in Shushan, the metropolis, all the Jews in that city expressed their concern in loud lamentations, and by assuming garments of deep mourning. Mordecai immediately repaired to the palace, and communicated the sad tidings to Esther the queen; and she at once resolved to intercede with the king for the safety of her people. This was an undertaking of great peril; for it was death to appear before the king uncalled, and she had not, for some time, been invited into his presence.

Esther well knew, however, that the Almighty alone could so control events as to bring about their deliverance; and she therefore requested Mordecai and all the

other Jews in Shushan to unite with her in solemn fasting and prayer for three days, promising to present herself, at the expiration of that time, in the presence of the king, and if possible, avert the threatened calamity. At the end of the three days she arrayed herself in her royal robes, and, attended by her maidens, entered the inner court of the palace, where she found the king seated upon his throne. He was fortunately in a pleasant humor, and he, therefore, no sooner beheld the queen than he extended to her the golden sceptre, which assured the forgiveness of her intrusion. She then invited the king and Haman to a banquet, at which she improved the favorable opportunity with such consummate tact, that the design of Haman appeared, in the king's view, as a plot for the destruction of the queen and her people; and in his rage he ordered him to be hanged upon the very gallows which he himself had prepared for Mordecai. But as the word of a Persian king could not be altered, the murderous edict which had, at Haman's instance, been issued, could not be revoked; and all that could be done, therefore, was to allow the Jews to defend themselves against those who should attempt to put the first order into execution. This occasioned much bloodshed throughout the empire; but the Jewish nation was preserved, and the deliverance thus wrought is still commemorated by an annual feast, called the *Feast of Purim*, or Lots.

Another incident in this remarkable history deserves attention. In the interval between the issuing of the order for the destruction of the Jews and the time of its execution, the king's attention was providentially drawn to the fact, that a domestic plot against his life had been formerly detected and made known by Mordecai. He then asked what reward had been conferred on the man to whom he owed his life; and being informed that he had hitherto

received no mark of favor, he sent for Haman, and asked him what ought to be done for the man "whom the king delighted to honor." Supposing that the king referred to himself, Haman enumerated distinctions of the very highest class, bordering even on those which belonged to royalty itself: he was, therefore, utterly confounded when the king directed him to see that all these honors were bestowed upon Mordecai, the Jew—the very Mordecai for whom he had just prepared a gallows fifty cubits high. Haman obeyed in silence; and on his own downfall, which immediately followed, Mordecai was promoted to his place, and thus became the protector of his nation.

While these and various other incidents relating to the Jews were transpiring in Chaldæa, Ezra was endeavoring to carry out his plans of improvement at Jerusalem; but it was not until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign, that the long-desired permission to build the walls of the city was received. This permission was obtained by Nehemiah, an eminent Jew, who held the high office of royal cup-bearer, and whose concern that "the city of his fathers' sepulchres lay waste," having been noticed by the king, led to the inquiries which induced this result. Nehemiah himself was permitted to go to Jerusalem, and was invested with full authority, as governor of the province, to build the walls of the city, and to make such other improvements as he might deem expedient. On his departure he carried with him orders from the king to the governors of the other western provinces, to render him every possible assistance, and to Asaph, the keeper of the forests of Lebanon, to furnish him with such timber as he might require.

Thus amply commissioned, Nehemiah proceeded to Judæa, escorted thither by a body of Persian officers and cavalry. When he arrived at Jerusalem he found the city

itself unbuilt, and containing a very scanty population. On making known his commission to the principal persons of the nation, he found them all disposed to enter zealously into the undertaking. The building of the new walls was, accordingly, at once commenced on the old foundations; but the Samaritans and other enemies of the Jews became alarmed at this movement, and endeavored, by every means in their power, to thwart the design. The Jews were, however, too much in earnest to be turned from their purpose; and they therefore armed the workmen, and still farther protected them by a guard of armed citizens, as they worked in bands upon different parts of the wall. In this manner the whole wall, with its gates and towers, was built in the short space of fifty-two days.

This great and important work was accomplished in 444 A. C.; and Nehemiah next took measures to induce as many of the people as were required for that purpose to come and settle in the city. His own wealth was sufficient to enable him to maintain his numerous servants, to keep an open table, and to defray the other expenses incident to his office as governor, without receiving from his countrymen the allowance to which he was entitled. The city was, therefore, soon inhabited, the neglected service of the Temple re-established, and the people thoroughly instructed in the law of Moses. The Feast of Tabernacles, which had been neglected since the days of Jeshua, was now celebrated with great joy; and this produced, in the people, so devout a frame of mind, that Nehemiah and Ezra, who was still living, seized the occasion to engage them to enter into a solemn covenant to serve God with singleness of heart, and to obey, in all things, the law of Moses. This covenant was sealed by the principal heads of families, who, on this occasion, represented the whole people.

In 432 A. C., at the expiration of twelve years, Nehemiah returned to the Persian court; but, unfortunately, he left no person behind him in Jerusalem whose power and influence were sufficient to supply his place. The consequence was, that the people soon began to neglect the Divine law, and to contract injurious connections with the heathen nations by whom they were surrounded. This improper conduct was by no means confined to the inferior classes of the people; but extended to the leading men, to the priests, and even to the high-priest. Intelligence of these proceedings at length reached Nehemiah at the Persian court; and he had no sooner received it, than he resolved to return to Jerusalem. On his arrival, he observed that the evil had been carried to a much greater extent than he had anticipated; and he at once applied a vigorous and unsparing hand to produce a reformation in this, as well as in other violations of the law. The Jews who had married heathen wives were compelled to part with them; the observance of the Sabbath was enforced; an illegal usury, which had at that time become very prevalent, and had been the means of bringing great numbers of the poor under personal servitude to the rich, was entirely abolished.

With these reformations of Nehemiah, the history of the Old Testament, properly speaking, closes; though Nehemiah himself continued to govern Judæa until his death, which occurred about 409 A. C. Such farther information as we possess concerning the Ancient Hebrews, is derived from the Books of the Maccabees, and from the historians Josephus and Philo.

SECTION III.

JUDÆA part of the Province of Syria—Joiada High-priest—Importance of the Priestly Office—General Prosperity of the Jews under the Persian Government—Persian Empire subverted by Alexander the Great during the High-priesthood of Jaddua—Continuous and violent Contentions between the Syrians and the Egyptians, for the Possession of Judæa—Oppression of the Jews by Antiochus.

JUDÆA ceased, after the death of Nehemiah, to form a distinct government, and was thenceforth, during the existence of the Persian empire, regarded as a part of the province of Syria. The internal government was administered by the high-priest, who now received his appointment from the Syrian satrap; and as, by this arrangement, the civil and pontifical governments were united in the same person, the office was ambitiously sought by the different members of the sacerdotal family, and frequently caused the most disgraceful contests among them. At this time Jeshua, Joachin, and Eliashib had filled the office of high-priest since the return of the Jews from their captivity; and at the death of the last, in 413 A. C., his son Joiada succeeded to the pontificate, and held the office until his death, which occurred in 373 A. C.

During all this period the Jews remained quiet under the Persian government, and faithful in their attachment to it; and nothing of importance in their history occurred, until the death of Joiada, which happened in the thirty-first year of the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and while Bagoses was satrap of Syria. Joiada was succeeded by his son Johanan, or Jehu; but he had scarcely commenced his administration, before Joshua, another son of Joiada, arrived at Jerusalem, and claimed the high-priesthood under an appointment from Bagoses. A violent contest between the two brothers immediately followed in the inner court of the Temple, the result of which was,

that Joshua was slain in that sacred place. As soon as Bagoses heard of this disgraceful outrage, he repaired to Jerusalem; and after sternly rebuking the Jews for thus impiously defiling the Temple of their God, he imposed upon them, as a punishment, a heavy tax upon the lambs offered in sacrifice. This tax was not remitted until after the death of Artaxerxes, when Bagoses was succeeded in the government of Syria, and the exaction ceased to be enforced.

In a revolt of the Phœnicians, which occurred in the early part of the reign of Ochus, the successor of Artaxerxes, the Jews appear to have been involved; for, after the reduction of Sidon, the king marched his army against Jericho, took the city, and sent the inhabitants into exile. Johanan, the high-priest, died in the eighteenth year of the reign of Ochus, and was succeeded by his son Jaddua, a just and virtuous pontiff, who resolved to sustain the reformations of Nehemiah. With this view he expelled his own brother Manasses from Jerusalem, for having married the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria. Manasses immediately repaired to the court of his father-in-law; and his presence there, as a member of the pontifical family, induced the Samarians, who were not allowed access to the Temple of Jerusalem, to resolve upon having a temple for themselves. Sanballat, accordingly, obtained from Darius Codomanus permission to build a temple for them on Mount Gerizim, and Manasses became their high-priest. This measure greatly widened the breach that already existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, each party contending for the exclusive claims of its own temple. The Jews insisted that sacrifices ought to be offered only at Jerusalem, where the original Temple had stood; while the Samaritans affirmed that Mount Gerizim was the true place of sacrifice, because

Joshua had there built the first altar. This controversy only increased with time, and eventually produced that mortal antipathy between the two nations, so often alluded to in the New Testament.

In 332 A. C., during the high-priesthood of Jaddua, the great event occurred which had been foreseen in the visions of the prophet Daniel. The victory which Alexander the Great obtained over the king of Persia, at Issus, was immediately followed by the siege of Tyre; and while the conquerer was engaged in that important enterprise, he summoned the surrounding nations to render him such aid as he required in prosecuting the siege. The Jews, in consequence of their allegiance to the king of Persia, refused to obey this summons; and this so exasperated Alexander that, as soon as he had destroyed Tyre, he marched with his whole army against Jerusalem. As he approached the city, Jaddua the high-priest, arrayed in his pontifical robes, and followed by the whole priestly order, advanced to meet him, and as he drew near, the mighty conquerer instantly recognized, in his person, the image that had appeared to him at Pella, in a dream, and invited him to come over to the conquest of the Persian empire. Awed by the imposing presence of the august train, and regarding the high-priest as the immediate representative of the Deity himself, Alexander at once bowed before Jaddua with the most profound reverence; after which he was conducted by the pontiff to the Temple, and shown those prophecies of Daniel in which his life and victories were so plainly foretold. Elated with this confirmation of his destiny from so high a source, Alexander confirmed the Jews in the undisturbed enjoyment of their national laws, including even their exemption from tribute every seventh year.

After the death of Alexander, the vast empire which he

had acquired was divided among his generals; and Judæa being situated between Egypt and Syria, was necessarily involved in the bitter contests in which the conquerer's successors were soon after engaged. In the first division of the empire, Syria, including Palestine, fell to the lot of Laomedon, and Egypt to Ptolemy Lagus. Between these two princes a war soon after broke out, and the former was defeated by Nicanor, one of Ptolemy's generals. The consequence of this defeat was the submission of all the provinces of Laomedon to Ptolemy; but the Jews, refusing to yield to the conquerer, Ptolemy himself invaded Judæa and besieged Jerusalem. Knowing that the Jews, through religious veneration for their Sabbath, would not, on that sacred day, resist an attack, he assailed Jerusalem on the Sabbath morning, and before evening the whole city was in his hands. He did not, however, treat the Jews with severity; and though he sent large numbers of them into Egypt, it was rather as colonists than as prisoners. These exiles there found many other of their countrymen who had been removed thither by Alexander the Great, to help to people his new city of Alexandria. To them the same privileges were extended that the Greek inhabitants themselves enjoyed; and as these privileges were afterwards confirmed by Ptolemy, many others went to Egypt of their own accord. Eight years after Ptolemy transported a large body of Jews to Lybia and Cyrene; and by such means, and the voluntary removals of many of them, who sought, under the shadow of the Egyptian throne, the peace which they could not find in their own country, Egypt soon became an important seat of Jewish population.

Judæa was eventually wrested from Ptolemy Lagus by Antigonus, one of the most ambitious and restless of all the generals that shared Alexander's empire. But after

the battle of Ipsus—fatal both to the life and cause of Antigonus—Ptolemy quietly recovered Judæa; and by the wisdom and justice of his government, he promoted the prosperity and gained the affections of the Jewish people. During his reign Simon the Just, an excellent high-priest, repaired the city and Temple of Jerusalem, and provided both with strong and lofty walls: he also completed the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures by adding the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, First and Second Chronicles, and the prophecies of Malachi. His death occurred in 291 A. C., after faithfully administering the duties of his office nine years.

While these events were passing in Judæa and the vicinity, Seleucus was rearing a power in Asia far surpassing any other that had arisen out of the ruins of Alexander's empire. Aware, like Ptolemy, of the value of the Jews as good and faithful citizens, Seleucus endeavored to attract them to the cities which belonged to him in Asia Minor, by offering them the same privileges which their countrymen enjoyed under Ptolemy in Egypt. Many Jews were drawn thither by these offers; and hence, in later periods, we find them almost as numerous in Asia Minor as they were in Egypt. When Ptolemy Philadelphus, in 285 A. C., succeeded to the Egyptian throne, he confirmed to the Jews all their former privileges. Ptolemy was a great patron of learning, and spared no pains or cost to procure, for his famous library at Alexandria, the most curious and valuable books that could be obtained. The most important of the literary acquisitions thus brought to Alexandria, was the Hebrew Scriptures, which this king caused to be translated from the original language into the Greek. This important translation was performed by seventy-two of the most learned Jews of that age, and it is hence called the *Septuagint*. The date to which the

performance is to be referred, is 278 A. C.; and, that the *original* also might be preserved, Eleazer, the high-priest, son of Simon the Just, caused, at the same time, a correct copy of it to be prepared and made a special deposit in the Temple.

Ptolemy Euergetes, who next ascended the throne of Egypt, greatly extended the privileges of the Jews, and testified his respect for their God, by offering many victims in sacrifice at Jerusalem; but in the reign of Ptolemy Philopator, his successor, the peace which the Jews had so long enjoyed under the Egyptian kings, began to be seriously disturbed. This disturbance arose out of the anxiety and efforts of Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, to annex to his own dominions the province of Palestine. The efforts of the Syrian king were for a time partially successful; but he was at length totally defeated by Philopator, and the victor immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and offered numerous sacrifices to the God of the Jews, in acknowledgment of his victory. The beauty and richness of the Temple so particularly attracted his attention, that he expressed a strong desire to view the interior of the building; but this was resisted by the high-priest, who informed him that it was unlawful even for the priests, under any circumstances, to enter the inner sanctuary. This only increased the king's curiosity, and he, therefore, persisted in his purpose; but as he was crossing the inner court to enter the sacred place, he fell speechless to the ground. Not understanding that this visitation was from the Almighty, the circumstance filled the king with resentment against the whole Jewish people; and he, therefore, on his return to Egypt, bitterly persecuted all those who were settled in that country. He deprived them of the peculiar privileges they had hitherto enjoyed, enrolled them with the lowest class of native Egyptians, and even con-

signed many of them to slavery and to death. He even contemplated the extirpation of the whole Jewish race; and beginning with those who dwelt in Egypt, he caused a large number of them to be brought together in Alexandria, with the view of having them destroyed by elephants in the hippodrome. A vast multitude of people, including the king and his court, assembled to view the horrid spectacle; but the elephants, instead of killing the victims exposed to their rage, turned upon the spectators, of whom they destroyed great numbers, while the Jews remained entirely unharmed. This extraordinary event was at once recognized as an interposition of the Almighty in their behalf; and Philopator, therefore, desisted from his design, and restored the Jews to their former position.

On the death of Philopator, in 205 A. C., the crown of Egypt fell to Ptolemy Epiphanes, then a child only five years of age. Taking advantage of the infancy of the new king, Antiochus the Great, who had meantime greatly extended his authority and power in the East, returned to the West, and resolved to make a fresh attempt to wrest the Syrian provinces from the Egyptian crown. In this attempt he was entirely successful; and the Jews readily submitted to his authority. For this willing submission, when we remember their general attachment to Egypt, we can only account by regarding it as an expression of their resentment of the treatment of Philopator, and of their satisfaction of the kindness and liberality of Antiochus to the numerous Jews who were settled in his dominions, on both sides of the Euphrates. Antiochus was much gratified by the proofs of attachment which he thus received; and when he visited Jerusalem, in 198 A. C., he conferred on the city such favors as he knew were best calculated to win the hearts of the inhabitants. He promised to restore the city to its ancient splendor, and to

repair the Temple at his own expense: he made provision for the regular performance of the sacred services, and protected the Temple from the intrusion of strangers. The extension of these favors to the Jews, with the confirmation of their political privileges, plainly indicated that Antiochus well understood the character of that remarkable people.

Seleucus, who succeeded Antiochus in 187 A. C., was as well disposed towards the Jews as his predecessor had been; and immediately after his accession to the throne, he gave orders that the expenses of the public worship should continue to be defrayed out of his own treasury. An unhappy altercation, however, between Onias, the high-priest, and Simon, the governor of the Temple, entirely changed the aspect of affairs. The latter sent to the king a very exaggerated account of the wealth contained in the Temple; and Seleucus, being in pressing want of money, resolved to appropriate all this treasure to himself. He, therefore, sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to take possession of it, and bring it to Antioch. But when he arrived at Jerusalem, Onias endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, assuring him that the amount was very inconsiderable, and that it was devoted to charitable purposes. Heliodorus, however, persisted in the purpose of executing his commission; but as he attempted to enter the Temple, he was terrified by an awful vision, and immediately withdrew, not only from the Temple, but from the city also, declaring the place to be under the protection of a supernatural and invisible power. The high-priest soon followed him to Antioch, and there represented to the king the misconduct of Simon in so unfavorable a light, that he procured his banishment from Jerusalem, and by that means restored peace to the city.

Seleucus Philopator was succeeded by his brother Antio-

chus Epiphanes, in 175 A. C. The Jews had now been subjects to the Greek monarchs of Egypt and Syria nearly a hundred and fifty years; and during that time, they had become familiar with the customs, the literature, and the philosophy of the Greeks. The less religious of them preferred the manners of that people to their own, and were even willing to abandon for theirs, the distinctive peculiarities of the Jewish faith and practice. Among this number was Jason, the brother of the high-priest, Onias. To compass this purpose, he bribed Epiphanes to bestow upon him the high-priesthood; and Onias was, accordingly, called to Antioch, and there kept in honorable exile. The party which sustained Jason was very considerable; for among the educated classes there was a strong inclination towards Grecian customs; and besides, Jason was empowered to bestow the citizenship of Antioch, which was a distinction earnestly sought.

Jason was no sooner seated in authority, than he established at Jerusalem a gymnasium for athletic exercises, and the games soon became so popular, that even the priests neglected the services of the Temple to be present at them. He also caused an academy to be opened, in which the Hebrew youth might be instructed after the manner of the Greeks; and he farther used every influence in his power to encourage the adoption of the Greek customs and habits, not only of external life, but even of actions and thought. His own adherents were not, however, prepared to carry these innovations to the extent to which he desired; and when he sent some young men to Tyre, therefore, to assist at the games celebrated in that city in honor of the Tyrian Hercules, and entrusted them with large sums of money to expend in sacrifice to that idol, they chose rather to appropriate the money to purposes of ship-building.

Jason did not, however, long enjoy his ill-gotten dignity; for, in 172 A. C., less than three years after he obtained the high-priesthood, he was supplanted by his younger brother Menelaus, who offered the king three hundred talents more for that dignity than Jason had given. The wickedness of Menelaus surpassed even that of his brother; for one of his first acts, after he assumed the duties of his office, was to abstract some golden vessels from the Temple, and send them secretly to Tyre for sale. The secret, however, transpired, and produced great excitement, particularly among the Jews of Antioch, who were both numerous and powerful. The exiled high-priest, the venerable Onias, especially, took such notice of the affair as to give great offense to Menelaus; and he, therefore, prevailed upon Andronicus, the king's deputy at Antioch, to put him to death.

Antiochus soon after engaged in a war with Egypt. He twice invaded that country with success; but the absence of his forces from Palestine, and a rumor of his death, encouraged the exiled Jason to attempt the recovery of his lost power. With a body of one thousand men, assisted by adherents within the city, he surprised Jerusalem, and treated with great severity the adherents of Menelaus, who himself sought refuge in the castle. The return of Antiochus from Egypt, however, compelled him to relinquish his power and abandon the city; and after wandering for some time from place to place, he at length miserably perished in Lacedæmonia.

Antiochus was so incensed at the satisfaction which the report of his death afforded the Jews, that he resolved to treat the affair as a revolt, and to punish it accordingly. With this view he abandoned Jerusalem to the fury of his soldiers for three days, during which four thousand of the inhabitants were put to death, and nearly an equal number

sold into slavery. The king, conducted by the impious Menelaus, then entered the Temple, and plundered it of all its treasures, vessels, and golden ornaments, carrying away with him eighteen hundred talents of gold and silver to Antioch. Farther to outrage the feelings of the Jews, and to insult their God, he sacrificed, before he left the city, a large hog upon the altar of burnt-offerings, and then left Menelaus in the high-priesthood.

The king of Egypt had, meantime, formed an alliance with the distant Romans; and when Antiochus, therefore, attempted another invasion of that country, he was met by the Roman ambassador, who, in the name of the Senate, commanded him to desist from his enterprise; and, drawing a circle around him in the sand, forbade him to step without it, until he had decided between the friendship and the enmity of Rome. The unprincipled tyrant was compelled to abandon his enterprise, and, burning with a sense of his disgrace, he failed not, on his return, to wreak his vengeance on the unoffending Jews. For this purpose he sent Apollonius, one of his generals, against Jerusalem, with an army of twenty-two thousand men, with strict orders to destroy the city, massacre the male inhabitants, and sell the women and children into slavery. Apollonius entered the city without opposition, and gave no indication of his intentions until the return of the Sabbath. On that sacred day, while the people were engaged in the solemn worship of the Most High, he executed his dreadful commission with unrelenting cruelty. After having slain great multitudes of the people, and sent away ten thousand into captivity, he plundered the city, then set it on fire, and demolished the walls. The Temple was permitted to stand, but its service was altogether abandoned; for it was commanded by a fortress which the Syrians erected, and from which the soldiers assaulted all who went there to wor-

ship. Thus, on the ninth of June, 168 A. C., the daily sacrifices of the Temple ceased, and the city of Jerusalem was deserted.

Not satisfied with the severe punishment thus inflicted upon the Jews, Antiochus next issued a decree, that the Grecian idolatry should be established throughout his vast dominions. This decree had special reference to the Jews, and so rigidly was it enforced, that death was the penalty of disobedience. The Temple of Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, his statue placed in the court, and sacrifices regularly offered to him. Such of the Jews as refused to share in this worship, or to evince their conformity to it by eating swine's flesh, were cruelly massacred, or subjected to the most exquisite tortures. Notwithstanding these severities, Antiochus had the mortification to see that his decree was much less effective than he had anticipated; and he, therefore, issued another decree, forbidding, under pain of death, the worship of Jehovah, and the observances of the Sabbath and other distinctive requirements of the Mosaic law. He even went so far as to endeavor to extinguish the law itself, by forbidding it to be read, and commanding every copy to be given up under pain of death. Under these trying circumstances, many apostatised from the faith, but many more were found faithful unto death, while others went forth to wander in deserts and in mountains, in dens and in caves of the earth, subsisting on such herbs and roots as they could find in these solitary places. It was on this occasion that the venerable Eleazer, though in the ninetieth year of his age, was put to the most excruciating tortures and death, for refusing to eat the forbidden swine's flesh.

The reading of the law by the Jews in their synagogues being forbidden by the last decree of Antiochus, they now began to read lessons from the prophets instead; and when

afterwards they resumed the reading of the law, they did not cease to read the prophets also; and from this circumstance arose the subsequent use, in their synagogues, of both the books of the law and those of the prophets. The synagogue itself originated with the Babylonian captivity, and the destruction of the Temple. The Jews, after they became settled in the land of their exile, without a Temple for Divine service, resolved, as a substitute, to erect particular buildings, in which they might be instructed in the law, and might worship the God of their fathers on the Sabbath day. These buildings, or synagogues, were always placed upon an elevated spot, sometimes within and some times without the city, and were similar in their construction and arrangements to our modern churches. They were soon found in every part of the country in which the exiles dwelt, and were so convenient that, after the Restoration, and the rebuilding of the Temple, they could not be dispensed with. In our Saviour's time, synagogues had become so numerous, that every town in Judæa had one or more of them: Tiberias, a city of Galilee, contained twelve of them; and in Jerusalem there were no less than four hundred and eighty.

THE WEST.

536 Thespis (Trag.)

525 Æschylus (b. 525).
Pindar (b. 518).
Pythagoras (d. 510).
Brutus and Roman Republic (509).

500

Sophocles (b. 495).
Herodotus and Euripides (b. 484).

475

Thucydides (b. 471.)
Phidias.
PERICLES.

450 The Decemviri.
Aristophanes and Xenophon (b. 444).
Polygnotus.
Plato (b. 428).

425 Scopas.
Zeuxis.
Ægospotami (405).

400 Socrates (d. 401).
Rome burnt (390).
Demosthenes (b. 385).
Aristotle (b. 384).

375 Epaminondas.
Leuctra (371).
Mantinea (362).
Xenophon (d. 355).

350
Plato (d. 347).
Epicurus (b. 342).
Chæronea (338).
Thebes taken by Alexander (335).

331

THE HEBREWS IN PERSIA.

RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

536. Zerubbabel with other Jews return to Jerusalem.

Second Temple begun (535).

Samaritans oppose Haggai (520).

Zechariah.

516. Dedication of second temple.

Ezra leads a large number of Jews to Jerusalem.

Esther.

Nehemiah re-

(444)

builds the walls of Jerusalem.

Death of Nehemiah (415).

From this time an almost impenetrable darkness pervades the history of the Hebrews, till the reign of ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES (175 B.C.)

Alexander visits

(333)

Jerusalem.

RHESA. JOANNA. JUDA. — *LINE* — JOSEPH. — *OF* — SEMEI. — *DAVID.* — MATTATHIAS. MAATH. NAGGE.

JESHUA. JOIACHIM. — *LINE* — ELIASHIB. — *OF* — JOIADA. — *HIGH-PRIESTS.* — JONATHAN. JADDUS.

In 559 B.C. the Empire of Persia was founded by CYRUS. In 546 it was extended by the conquest of Lydia; and again, in 538, by the conquest of Babylon, it reached dimensions prefigured by the BEAR OF DANIEL'S VISION. After the conquests of CYRUS in Asia, CAMBYSES in Africa, and DARIUS in Europe, the Empire reached from the Indus to the Nile and the Danube, and included Persia, Media, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Phœnicia, Palestine, Asia Minor, and Thrace.

BATTLE OF ARBELA, 331 B.C.

THE EAST.

EDICT OF CYRUS. 536

Egypt conquered by Cambyses (525). 525

Persian Wars (500–449). 500
First War (492).
Second War (490).
Xerxes (485).
Third War (480).
Fourth War (478).

475

Eurymedon (466).
Artaxerxes (465).

450

Xerxes II. (425). 425
Sogdianus.
Darius II. (424).
Cyrus (Younger).
Artaxerxes II. (405).
Cunaxa (bat. 401). 400
The 10,000 Greeks
Antalcidas (387).

375

Artaxerxes III. (361).
Temple of Diana burnt.
Destruction of Sidon (351). 350
Arces (338).
Darius III. (336).
Issus (bat. 333).
End of Persian Empire (331). 331

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

THE ASAMONEANS.

SECTION I.

The ASAMONEANS—Resolution to throw off the Syrian Yoke—Operations of MATTATHIAS, Father of the Family—His Death—Succeeded in command by his son JUDAS—Success of Judas—His Alliance with the ROMANS—The Consequences of his Death—Succeeded by his Brother JONATHAN—Offices of High-priest and Prince united in his Person—His Tragical Death—Succeeded by his Brother SIMON.

AFTER the relentless persecution of the Jews by Antiochus had raged for six months, God brought about their deliverance through the noble family of the Asamoneans, Mattathias and his sons, generally known as the Maccabees. Asamoneas, from whom the family derived its name, was the great-grandfather of Mattathias, of the lineage of Phineas, the son of Eleazer, the eldest branch of the family of Aaron.

Mattathias was a man of great influence in Modin, his native city; and for this reason, Apelles, the king's commissioner at that place, was very anxious that he should there set the example of compliance with the king's mandate. He, therefore, offered to advance him to great power and riches if he would forsake the law of his God, and do homage to the Grecian idols. But Mattathias repelled, with indignation, the inducements to apostasy held out by the commissioner; and in a transport of holy zeal, he ran and smote down a Jew who was at that moment advancing to offer sacrifice at the idol altar. This bold act drew the sword which was not again to be sheathed till Israel should be free. Animated by the same noble impulse, the sons of

Mattathias, and a few other congenial spirits, immediately united with him, attacked and slew the commissioner and his attendants, and then passing through the city, called upon all who were zealous for the law of God to follow them. The number that rallied round Mattathias, though very considerable, was not sufficiently large to meet the enemy; and they all, therefore, withdrew to the wilderness, whither they were soon followed by the king's troops; and being attacked on the Sabbath day, many of them suffered themselves to be slain without offering the least resistance. Mattathias at once saw the fatal consequences of indulging the usual scruple of non-resistance on the Sabbath; and he, therefore, directed that, for the future, they should defend themselves on that day as well as at other times.

The standard of revolt being now raised, all who were zealous for the restoration of the liberty and the religion of their fathers, flocked to it; and Mattathias, therefore, soon found his forces sufficiently numerous to enable him to act on the offensive. They accordingly left their retreat, and passing, chiefly by night, through the country, pulled down the idolatrous altars, and destroyed their persecutors wherever they found them. Having done this, they re-opened the synagogues, enforced the ceremonies enjoined by the law, and recovered many of their sacred books from heathen hands. In the midst of these successes death arrested the career of the heroic Mattathias; but he left five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, and Jonathan, all of whom were worthy of his name. Just before his death Mattathias advised that the judicious Simon should be their counsellor, and the valiant Judas their military leader. From Judas, who was surnamed Maccabeus, their name of Maccabees descended; and he is supposed to have derived this name from a cabalistic word

formed out of M. C. B. J., the initial letters of the words *Mi Chamoka Baalim Jehovah*, or, "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah!" which he bore upon his standard.

Judas soon displayed such extraordinary talents as a commander, that he may, in many respects, be considered as one of the most heroic leaders that the Jewish nation ever produced. With a force not exceeding six thousand men, he boldly took the field against the large and well disciplined armies of Antiochus; and notwithstanding they were led by commanders of the highest reputation, he successively defeated them all. By the defeat of Apollonius, the Governor of Samaria, he was enabled to make himself master of some of the principal towns and fortresses of Judæa; and, after having expelled the Jews who had turned to idolatry, from them, he placed them under the control of his own faithful adherents. He then marched against the distinguished general Seron, who had taken the field with a powerful army, in order to suppress the revolt at once. At the sight of such vastly superior numbers, the forces of Judas were greatly alarmed; but the example of their heroic leader soon so inspired their courage, that they fell upon the enemy with resistless fury, and gained a complete victory. This victory spread the fame of Judas throughout all the neighboring states; and Antiochus now saw that the revolt required more attention than he had hitherto given to it. He, therefore, resolved completely to crush it before it became too formidable to be easily overcome; and with this view, he sent five large armies into Judæa, under the command of his most skillful generals. They were all, however, successively defeated by the valiant Maccabeans, within the space of a single year.

The last of these battles was with Lysias, the regent of Syria, whose army consisted of sixty thousand choice in-

fantry, and five thousand cavalry. To meet this formidable army, Judas, with unshaken confidence in the Almighty, marched forth with only ten thousand men; and at Bethsura, near Jerusalem, he assailed them with such vigor, that five thousand of the Syrians were slain on the spot, and the rest completely routed. Lysias was so astonished at the desperate resistance of the Jews, that he immediately left Judæa, and returned, with the remnant of his army, to Antioch. These important triumphs of Judas occurred in 165 A. C.

The retreat of Lysias left Judæa under the exclusive control of Judas; and having marched to Jerusalem, he took possession of the city, which he found to be little else than a heap of ruins. The Temple, however, was still standing; and after having purified that sacred building from every trace of Syrian idolatry, he consecrated it anew to the service of God, and revived the daily sacrifices and worship, which had been suspended during three calamitous years. This important event occurred about the time of the winter solstice; and it was soon after celebrated by the Jews, by a solemn feast, called the *Feast of Dedication*. All this success did not, however, enable Judas to expel from Jerusalem the Syrian garrison of the fortress which had been built by Apollonius to overlook the Temple; and he, therefore, protected the latter by surrounding it with high walls and towers, within which he kept a valiant and watchful force.

Antiochus was at Ecbatana when he heard of the sad overthrow of his armies in Judæa, and the intelligence so enraged him that he at once denounced the most horrible vengeance, not only upon the Jewish people, but even upon the land itself. But while he was yet uttering his denunciations, he was smitten by the Almighty with a loathsome disease, attended with the most excruciating torments.

Before his death, which soon after occurred, he confessed that he was smitten by the hand of God, as a punishment for his persecution of the Jews, and the desecration of their sacred Temple. "I perceive, therefore," said he, "that for this cause these troubles came upon me; and, behold, I perish through grief, in a strange land." The death of Antiochus occurred the year following the defeat of Lysias.

By the death of Antiochus, the Jews were delivered from the most inveterate enemy they had ever had; but Lysias, as regent, still carried on the war against them, in the name of Antiochus Eupator, the infant son and successor of the late king. The army with which he entered Judæa, though much larger than the one at the head of which he had so recently been defeated by Judas, was promptly met and completely routed by that hero; and such was the effect of this disastrous overthrow upon the mind of Lysias, that he confessed his inability to contend with the mighty God who defended the Jewish people; and offered them terms of peace so reasonable, that Judas and his associates thought it prudent to accept them. The peace was not, however, of long continuance; for the Syrian garrison, in the castle of Jerusalem, still so greatly annoyed the Jews of that city, that Judas resolved, if possible, to remove from the capital so serious a source of evil. Before the attack was made, the numerous apostate Jews in the castle, dreading the treatment that they might expect from their more faithful brethren, should they prove successful, secretly left the place; and hastening to Antioch, they there made such representations to the regent and the young king, that they at once resolved, notwithstanding their recent defeat, to undertake a new war against Judæa. With this view they raised an army consisting of one hundred thousand infantry, twenty thousand cavalry, thirty-two

war-elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes.

This mighty host was evidently designed to extinguish the whole Jewish nation; and at its head Lysias marched southward, and besieged Bethsura, a strong fortress, built to protect the Idumæan frontier, and near which he met with his first overthrow from Judas. This vast army so overawed the comparatively little band under the command of Judas, that he could not induce them to venture a pitched battle; but they fell upon the invaders by night, and before they knew who had entered their camp, four thousand of them were slain. Judas drew off his forces during the night, and the next morning a general battle occurred; but through fear of being surrounded by the enemy, the Jews retreated to Jerusalem, which was now well prepared for defense. Though the loss of the Jews in this battle was comparatively small, yet Judas had to mourn the loss of his brother Eleazer, who was crushed by the fall of an elephant which he himself slew, under the erroneous impression that it bore the person of the king. The Syrian army having taken Bethsura, and placed a strong garrison in it, immediately advanced to Jerusalem and laid siege to that city; but while the Jews were trembling for their safety, Lysias received intelligence that Philip, a rival regent, whom the late king had appointed on his death-bed, had entered Syria with a large army, and taken possession of Antioch. He, therefore, made a hasty treaty with the Jews, granting them all that they demanded, and hastened to the defeat of Philip; but before he left Jerusalem, he threw down, in violation of the treaty, the strong walls that surrounded the Temple. Judas was now recognized as the governor of Judæa; and, from this period, 163 A. C., his accession to the principality is usually dated

Menelaus, the apostate high priest, who had again deserted to the Syrians, and had encouraged the late expedition, in the hope of obtaining the government of Judæa, being now regarded by them as the real author of their disasters, was, by royal order, smothered in an ash-pit at Berea; the vacant high-priesthood was bestowed upon Alcimus, to the exclusion of the rightful successor, Onias, the son of that Onias who had been murdered at Antioch, at the instigation of Menelaus. In consequence of this disappointment, Onias retired into Egypt and, being well received by Ptolemy Philomator, he asked and obtained permission of that monarch to build a temple for the accommodation of the numerous Jews in that country. The temple was built at Heliopolis, "the city of the sun," after the model of the Temple of Jerusalem; but it was neither so large nor so magnificent as the latter. Onias became high-priest; and there being many other priests and Levites in the country, the services were thenceforth conducted at Heliopolis as at Jerusalem, until both Temples were destroyed in the reign of the Roman emperor Vespasian.

Alcimus, the new high-priest, was not only a man of loose principles, but was firmly attached to the Grecian idolatries; and for these reasons the Jews soon deposed him from the pontificate, and drove him out of the country. In the following year Antiochus Eupator and the regent Lysias were defeated and slain by Demetrius Soter, the son of Seleucus Philopator, and rightful heir to the throne. As soon as this prince was established in his kingdom, all the Jewish traitors and apostates, with Alcimus at their head, came to him with many grievous complaints against Judas and his party; and Alcimus represented his own expulsion as an expression of contempt towards the Syrian power. Listening to these complaints, Demetrius resolved to reinstate Alcimus in the priesthood; and for this pur-

pose he sent Bacchides, one of his most skillful generals, into Judæa. Bacchides entered the country without any hostile manifestations; and after having treacherously slain many of the Jews who had unsuspectingly placed themselves within his power, he left Alcimus with a force that he considered sufficiently strong to secure him in his office. But Bacchides had no sooner withdrawn than Judas, who had retired before him, routed the forces under Alcimus, and easily recovered his former position. Alcimus again repaired to Antioch, and renewed his complaints to the king with increased earnestness. Incensed at the repulse of his forces, and the defiance of his authority, Demetrius now sent another and more powerful army into Judæa, commanded by Nicanor; but in the second action that occurred, that general was so completely defeated by Judas, that out of thirty-five thousand men, not one was left alive to bear the tidings of the disaster to Antioch. This great victory was followed by a season of rest, and was considered of so much importance by the Jews, that they commemorated it by the establishment of an annual festival.

Wearied by these constant conflicts with Syrian power, Judas now sought and obtained an alliance with the distant Romans. As the first fruits of this alliance the Roman Senate sent a message to Demetrius, commanding him, on pain of their displeasure, to abstain for the future from persecuting the Jews. But before this message was received, the valiant Judas had fallen in a desperate conflict with Bacchides and Alcimus, who had been sent to avenge the destruction of Nicanor and his army. The body of the hero was deposited by his brothers, Simon and Jonathan, in the family sepulchre at Modin; and all Israel mourned for him many days, crying, "How is the valiant fallen, that delivered Israel." The death of their

great leader threw the Jews into such consternation that, comparatively without opposition, the Syrians took possession of Jerusalem, slew many of the adherents of the Maccabees, and restored Alcimus to the high-priesthood. Instead of profiting by his past experience, however, he immediately commenced making new innovations into the religion of his country, in order to conform it to the practices of the heathen. He now went so far as to break down the wall which separated the inner from the outer court of the Temple, in order that there might be no difference between the Temple privileges of the Jews, and those of the Gentiles. In the full career of his guilt, the wicked high-priest was, however, soon after cut off, and died in all the agonies of anticipated future retribution.

On the death of Alcimus, Bacchides returned to Syria, and the Jews remained unmolested during the two following years. Jonathan, the youngest brother of Judas, had, meantime, been chosen by them as their prince and leader, and he employed this interval of peace in establishing a regular government, in strengthening the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem, and in effecting various reformations in both the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the country. The adverse faction, however, soon became jealous of the prosperity of his administration; and they, therefore, conspired, with the aid of Bacchides, to capture, in one night, both Jonathan and all his adherents throughout the land. This design being secretly communicated to Jonathan, he seized fifty of the leading conspirators and put them to death; and then he and his brother Simon, collecting together their friends, retired with them to Bethbasi, a strong fortress in the wilderness. Thither they were immediately pursued by Bacchides, who laid close siege to the place; but the besieged defended themselves so successfully, that Bacchides at length became weary of an

enterprise, from which so little honor was to be won; and putting those to death who had engaged him in it, he made peace with Jonathan, and after an exchange of prisoners, he withdrew his forces, engaging to trouble the land no more.

During the three following years of peace, Jonathan so far improved the condition of his country as to give the promise of stability to his government; but at the expiration of that time a new claimant of the crown of Syria appeared, in the person of Alexander Balas. Both he and Demetrius were anxious to secure the friendship of so warlike a people as the Jews had now become; but the remembrance of the wrongs which Demetrius had inflicted upon the nation, as well as good policy, induced Jonathan to espouse the cause of Balas. In return, Balas bestowed upon Jonathan the high-priesthood, which had now been vacant seven years, and sent him also a purple robe and crown, as prince of Judæa. Thus, with the full sanction of the people, the chief ecclesiastical and civil power were both vested in Jonathan; and at the Feast of Tabernacles, in 153 A. C., he assumed his arduous duties.

When Demetrius heard of what had passed in Judæa, he determined to outbid Balas for the aid of the Jews; and he therefore sent to Jonathan a long list of privileges and immunities which he would grant the people, and honors for himself, if they would espouse his cause. But distrusting his sincerity, they resolved to adhere to the cause of Balas; and that cause, essentially through their aid, proving successful, when Balas went to Ptolemais to espouse the daughter of the king of Egypt, he gratefully acknowledged the efficient assistance he had received from Jonathan during the struggle, and treated him with distinguished respect. But Balas, unfortunately, abandoned all

the affairs of government to his ministers; and by that means he so alienated his friends and encouraged his enemies, that in the fifth year of his reign, he was treacherously murdered, and his head laid at the feet of the younger Demetrius, the son of Demetrius Soter.

Demetrius Nicator now became king of Syria, and as Jonathan had remained true to Balas during the recent struggle, he was summoned to Antioch to account for his conduct. He unhesitatingly obeyed the summons, carrying with him valuable presents; and he there conducted himself so discreetly, that Demetrius not only confirmed him in all the dignities he had received from Alexander Balas, but added also all the valuable privileges which had been offered him by his father at the commencement of the contest. Jonathan, soon after his return to Jerusalem, sent an embassy to Rome to renew the treaty which his brother Judas had made with that people; and his government, which continued ten years after that time—in all, seventeen years—was, in the highest degree, beneficial to his country, and tended much to give to the peculiar institutions of the people that determinate character which was essential to their continuance.

The death of Jonathan was as tragical as his life had been eminent and useful. Tryphon, a former governor of Antioch, had raised to the throne a younger son of Alexander Balas, in whose interest the Jews, during the struggle, earnestly engaged. They were led to this course by the perfidy of Demetrius, who had cancelled all the privileges he had granted to the Jewish people on his accession to the throne. Tryphon had, however, espoused the cause of the young Balas merely to prepare the way to the throne for himself; but as he saw in Jonathan a formidable obstacle to his ambitious purposes, he determined to remove him out of the way. This he soon after accomplished at Ptole-

mais, where Jonathan and a thousand of his followers, who had attended him as a guard, were first treacherously induced to enter the gates of the city, and then barbarously murdered.

The tragical death of Jonathan occurred in 143 A. C., and the melancholy event filled the Jews with grief and consternation. To avert the danger which this state of feeling threatened, Simon, the only remaining brother of Judas and Jonathan, called the people together in the Temple, and offered himself as their leader. The offer was accepted with joy; and the first act of Simon's administration was to put the country in a state of complete defense, by repairing the fortresses and storing them with munitions of war. He then sent an embassy to Demetrius, offering to acknowledge his sovereignty, and to assist him against Tryphon, who had murdered young Balas and assumed the crown himself. Demetrius at once accepted this offer; and in return, acknowledged Simon as the high-priest and prince of the Jews, relinquished all claims upon him for tribute, customs and taxes, and granted an amnesty for all past offenses against himself. This agreement being committed to writing, was regarded by both parties as a charter of Jewish freedom and independence; and, accordingly, with the year 143 A. C., the Jews commenced a new epoch, dating from it as from the first year of "the freedom of Jerusalem."

Assuming now the character of an independent prince, Simon resolved to reduce the fortresses that still held out against his authority; and amongst the rest, he compelled the Syrian garrison in the citadel of Jerusalem to surrender. He appointed his son John commander of the forces, and sent him with Demetrius to the wars in the East; where, from his exploits in Hyrcania, he received the surname of Hyrcanus. In the third year of his reign Simon

renewed the treaty with the Romans, and sent them, as a present, a shield of gold worth fifty talents. With this expression of respect the Roman senate were so well pleased, that they immediately wrote to all the kings in the neighborhood of Judæa, commanding them to treat the Jews as friends and allies of the Romans. In the following year Antiochus Sidetes ascended the Syrian throne, his brother Demetrius having fallen into the hands of the Parthians, by whom he was detained in bondage. Sidetes confirmed to Simon all the privileges that had been granted by his predecessors, and added also the regal prerogative of coining money. Sidetes had, however, no sooner defeated and slain the usurper Tryphon, than he demanded the surrender of all the strongholds which Simon had taken, and the payment of the tribute, also, which had been relinquished.

To enforce these extraordinary demands, Sidetes sent a powerful army into Judæa; but it was soon met and completely defeated by Simon's two eldest sons, John and Judas. This victory was followed by an interval of peace, during which Simon and two of his sons were treacherously murdered at Jericho, by his son-in-law, Ptolemy, who aspired to his office and power. Ptolemy, at the same time, attempted to destroy John Hyrcanus; but that young prince, having received intelligence of his design, fled to Jerusalem, where he was joyfully received, and immediately elected by the people as his father's successor. Ptolemy now applied to Antiochus for an army to enable him to bring the country again under the Syrian yoke; but Hyrcanus, without waiting for his movements, marched against him, and besieged him in a fortress near Jericho, in which he had taken refuge. The sabbatical year, however, being about to commence, the siege was soon after raised, and Ptolemy fled beyond the Jordan to

await the arrival of Antiochus, which took place in the following year, 135 A. C.

Antiochus, as soon as he entered Judæa, laid siege to Jerusalem; and the city, not being well supplied with provisions, was soon reduced to the greatest extremity. The time of the Feast of Tabernacles now approached, and Hyrcanus begged a week's respite to enable him to celebrate the festival. Antiochus not only complied with this request, but even supplied the victims for the sacrifice; and he soon after concluded a peace with Hyrcanus, though he knew the city could, at any moment, be taken. He, however, eventually brought Judæa once more under the Syrian dominion, dismantled Jerusalem, and exacted tribute for the fortresses which were held out of the country. Antiochus was soon after killed in a war with the Parthians; and of the confusion which followed Hyrcanus availed himself to enlarge his territories, and to recover the independence of his country.

SECTION II.

JOHN HYRCANUS—Reduction of Samaria, and other triumphs—The Government seized by ARISTOBULUS—His Cruelties—ALEXANDER—The *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*—Their relative character—Civil War—The Government of ALEXANDRA—Contentions between HYRCANUS and ARISTOBULUS, sons of Alexandra—Pompey the Great in Judæa—Jerusalem besieged and taken by Him—He enters the Holy of Holies—Aristobulus carried captive to Rome, and Herod, son of Antipater, made KING.

FROM the death of Antiochus Sidetes, Judæa ceased to be a dependent of the Syrian empire; and, thenceforward, no service was rendered, nor tribute, nor homage paid by the Jews to the kings of Syria.

Free and independent of the most inveterate enemy that his country had ever known, John Hyrcanus now

THE WEST.

331 — Samnite War (326-304).

325 — Demosthenes and Aristotle (d. 322).

Epicurus (fl.).

300 — Euclid (fl.).

Samnite War (299-290).

War with Pyrrhus (280-275).

275 — Eratosthenes (b.).

Italy conquered by the Romans.

1st Punic War (263-241).

Plautus (b. 254).

250 — Hannibal (b. 247).

Scipio (b. 234).

225 — 2d Punic War (218-201).

Cannæ (216).

Bat. Metaurus.

Polybius.

Zama (202).

200 — Macedonian War (200-197).

Terence (b. 194).

Cynocephalæ.

175 — Macedonian War.

Pydna (bat. 168).

Marius (b. 157).

3d Punic War (150-146).

146 Scipio Africanus.

THE HEBREWS IN GREECE.

BATTLE OF ARBELA, 331 B.C.

(333) ALEXANDER (331-323).

In 331 B.C. Alexander founded the Greco-Macedonian Empire, or the Leopard of Daniel's Vision, which, extending from the Indus to Greece, broke in pieces at his death, in 323. The Battle of Ipsus, 301 B.C., put an end to the wars between the successors of Alexander, and gave rise to the Four Kingdoms of Macedon, Thrace, Syria, and Egypt,—ruled by Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy,—which were seen by Daniel in the Vision of the Ram and He-Goat.

REVOLUTIONS (323-301) under Perdiccas, Eumenes, and Antigonus. (301)

The Four EMPIRES or (I. Macedon, II. Thrace, III. Syria, and IV. Egypt.) or the Four Horns (222) in the Vision of Daniel, which continued till they were, in succession, overcome by the rising power of ROME. (168-30 B.C.) End of Macedon (168).

The Jews emerge from their long obscurity, and become free under the Maccabees. (167-30.)

FALL OF CARTHAGE, 146 B.C.

Esli. Naum. — *LINE* — Amos. — *OF* — Mattathias. — *DAVID.* — Joseph. Janna.

Onias I. Simon. Eleazar.—*Line*—Manasses.—*Of*—Onias II. Simon II.—*High-Priests.*—Jason. Menelaus.

THE EAST.

Darius III. 331

325 — Ptolemy I. (323).
Philip III. (323).
Antigonus (318).
Cassander (316).
Seleucus I. (312).
Demetrius (301).

Bat. Ipsus (301). 300

Antipater (296).
Ptolemy II. (285).
Antochus I. (280).
Antigonus (277).

275 — The Septuagint.

Antiochus II. (261).

250 — Ptolemy III. (247).
Seleucus II. (246.)
Demetrius II. (239).
Antigonus Doson.

Seleucus III. (226). 225
Seleucus IV. (222).
Antiochus III. (223).
Ptolemy IV. (220).

Ptolemy V. (205). 200

Seleucus IV. (187).
Ptolemy VI. (181).
Perseus (179).

Antiochus IV. (175). 175
Antiochus V. (164).
Demetrius (162)
Soter.

Alexander Bala. 146

commenced his administration of the government with unusual energy and spirit. His first enterprise, the invasion of Samaria, must have been extremely acceptable to the Jews. After various preliminary successes, he took Shechem, the principal city of the Samaritans, and destroyed the temple which had been set up by them upon Mount Gerizim. He then marched against the Idumæans, the descendants of the ancient Edomites; and having completely subdued them, he offered them the alternative of quitting the country, or of adopting the Jewish religion. These people had, during the captivity, established themselves in the southern part of Judæa, and made Hebron their capital; and sooner than leave the country, to which they had now become much attached, they espoused the Jewish faith; and, afterwards, gradually became so closely incorporated with the Jewish people, as scarcely to be distinguished from them. The alliance with the Romans was, meantime, renewed; and in the course of the two following years, two separate decrees were issued from the senate, in favor of Hyrcanus and the Jewish people, securing them against the aggressions of their neighbors. Thus, by consolidating the government, by conquests, and by alliances with other nations, Hyrcanus raised the Jews to a position of much greater dignity and power, than they had occupied at any other time since their return from captivity.

At his death, which occurred in 107 A. C., Hyrcanus left the principality to his wife; but the government was immediately seized by his eldest son, Aristobulus, who cast his mother into prison and there left her to die of hunger. He also imprisoned the three younger of his brothers; but for Antigonus, the next in age to himself, he showed much affection, and frequently employed him in state affairs. Being, as he supposed, firmly fixed in his government, Aristobulus now assumed the royal title and diadem—a distinction

which had not been claimed by any previous member of his family. Ambitious to extend his dominions, he attacked and subdued the Iturians; and these people, like the Edomites, chose rather to accept the Jewish religion than to abandon their country. In the midst of these triumphs Aristobulus was led, through an unjust suspicion, to put his beloved brother, Antigonus, to death; and, when he discovered his mistake, the horror and remorse which followed, soon terminated both his reign and life. His three imprisoned brothers were now liberated; and the eldest of them, Alexander Jannæus, was at once advanced to the throne.

Alexander commenced his reign in 105 A. C., and soon discovered those talents for war which distinguished so many of his predecessors. He subdued the Philistines and compelled them to adopt the Jewish religion; and, soon after, brought under subjection Moab, Ammon, Gilead, and a part of Arabia Petræa. His reign was not, however, in other respects, happy; for the Pharisees, a sect that had attained to great power and influence in the reign of Hyrcanus, were a source of constant annoyance to him. Their turbulent character and lofty pretensions, induced Alexander, in imitation of his father Hyrcanus, to attach himself to the rival sect of the Sadducees. This led the Pharisees to detest both his person and his government, and they hence embraced every opportunity to exasperate the minds of the people not only against his administration, but also against his conduct and character. He was, about this time, unfortunate in the siege of Amathus, beyond the Jordan; and this circumstance gave such increased boldness to the Pharisees, that they, at length, openly assailed him while he was engaged in the most sacred act of the ritual service. At the Feast of Tabernacles, as he stood before the altar, performing the functions of his office, the Pharisees, and the multitude incited by them, cast at him the

citrons which the Jews usually carried in their hands on that occasion.

A civil war of nine years was the consequence of this outrageous insult to Alexander; and in the course of the contest more than fifty thousand persons perished. This war was marked, throughout, by the most cruel acts of barbarity; and the concluding scene, the taking of Bethone by Alexander, surpassed all the rest. The conqueror, after the fall of the place, brought eight hundred prisoners to Jerusalem, and after having put their wives and children to death before their eyes, caused them all to be sacrificed in one day. After the tragical close of the civil war, Alexander spent three years in reducing the fortresses which had fallen into hostile hands during these troubles, and in extending his power beyond the Jordan; and then returning to Jerusalem, he abandoned himself to such an extent, to sloth, luxury, and drunkenness, that he brought on a fever under which he lingered for three years, and then died, 82 A. C.

Alexander, before his death, had placed the government in the hands of his wife, Alexandra, and made her the guardian of his two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. He, at the same time, advised her to commit to the leaders among the Pharisees the management of public affairs; and with this mark of confidence they were so well pleased, that they not only secured her own peaceful succession to the throne, but bestowed a magnificent funeral on their old enemy, her deceased husband. The Pharisees being now the dominant party, and greatly exceeding the Sadducees, both in numbers and in popularity, the queen soon became a mere tool in their hands. She was compelled to yield to all their demands, and to sanction a most violent persecution of the Sadducees—the former friends and adherents of Jannæus. These measures drove many of the most

valuable citizens of Jerusalem to abandon the city, and seek shelter in the more obscure towns.

Of the two sons of the late king, Hyrcanus, who was a man of quiet habits and indolent temper, was appointed high-priest. The other son, Aristobulus, possessed a more ardent and active spirit; and being much displeased with the proceedings of his mother, and the conduct of the Pharisees, he, with the principal men of the party of the Sadducees, asked permission of the queen to quit the country, or to reside in the frontier towns, out of the way of their persecutors. The request was granted on condition that they would avoid those towns in which the queen kept her treasures. Aristobulus's restless spirit was still, however, dissatisfied; and returning soon after to Jerusalem, he obtained the command of some forces to relieve Damascus. His only object seems, however, to have been to obtain an opportunity to render himself agreeable to the soldiers, as he soon after returned without having effected anything of importance. Alexandra, the queen, died after a peaceful reign of nine years, in 70 A. C.; and not being willing, openly, to express a preference for either of the contending parties, she refused to nominate a successor. The Pharisees, however, immediately placed her son Hyrcanus, on the throne; but his reign continued only three months; for Aristobulus having obtained possession of the principal castles of the kingdom, raised a large army and compelled Hyrcanus to relinquish both the crown and the high-priesthood, and retire into private life.

Upon the fall of Hyrcanus, 69 A. C., Aristobulus was acknowledged sovereign, and the tyrannical oppressions and persecutions of the Pharisees ceased. After passing about six years in the retirement of private life, Hyrcanus was persuaded by Antipater, an Idumæan, who had

been appointed governor of Idumæa by Alexander Jannæus, to escape by night to Petra, the capital of the Arabian king, Aretas, and claim his protection and assistance against his brother Aristobulus, who, Antipater had taught him to believe, sought his life. Aretas at once espoused his cause, and at the head of an army of fifty thousand men, accompanied him back to Judæa. Being at once joined by many Jews who were friendly to the cause of Hyrcanus, Aretas defeated Aristobulus, and compelled him to retreat to the temple-mount, which had recently been turned into a strong fortress. The fortress was immediately besieged by the victorious party, and the siege was carried on with an animosity peculiar to civil war. The besiegers would not permit the lambs for sacrifice to be introduced into the Temple, though Aristobulus offered, from the walls, the money to pay for them.

At this period Pompey the Great was commanding the Roman forces in the East, and was in Armenia, conducting a war against Mithridates and Tigranes, while Severus, one of his generals, commanded in Syria. Aristobulus, in the emergency of his affairs, implored the assistance of Severus, who was now at Damascus, against the party of his brother; and as an inducement to a compliance with his request, he sent him four hundred talents of gold. The party of Hyrcanus made a similar application, offering the same sum; but the Roman general preferred the cause of Aristobulus, and therefore ordered Aretas instantly to withdraw his forces from Judæa, or expect to feel the effect of Roman displeasure. The Arabian king at once obeyed the order of Severus; but being slow in his retreat, he was overtaken by Aristobulus, and was defeated in a bloody battle, in which many of the friends of Hyrcanus perished. As by this victory Aristobulus again became master of Judæa, he was anxious to procure from the Romans a

recognition of his title to the crown. With this view, when Pompey soon after arrived at Damascus, he sent an embassy to him, bearing, as a present, an exquisitely-wrought vine of gold, valued at five hundred talents. The present was accepted, but the suit was postponed for future consideration. This vine was afterwards deposited in the Temple of Jupiter, at Rome, with the name of Alexander, the father of Aristobulus, inscribed upon it as the donor.

In the following year both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent deputies to Pompey, requesting him to investigate their relative pretensions to the crown of Judæa; but he deferred the matter till the year ensuing, when both claimants appeared before him in person, accompanied by numerous witnesses to sustain their respective causes. At the same time another Jewish party presented themselves before Pompey, and accused both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus of having changed the government into a monarchy, when it should properly be administered by the high-priest. Pompey, however, still withheld his decision until he should be at leisure to come himself and settle the controversy at Jerusalem. Hyrcanus, though of very weak capacity, yet being the elder, had, evidently, the best claim to the crown; and the impetuous Aristobulus, aware of this fact, and conscious that the very incapacity of his rival brother rendered him more acceptable to the Roman leader, abruptly withdrew from Damascus, and hastened back to his own country to make preparations for war. This conduct of Aristobulus so enraged Pompey that he resolved to punish him with the utmost severity; and, therefore, on his return from an expedition against the Nabathæan Arabs, he marched into Judæa, and summoned Aristobulus, who, on his approach, had retired to the strong fortress of Alexandrium, to appear before him. Aristobulus, trusting to Roman magnanimity, immediately

obeyed the summons; but Pompey no sooner had him in his power, than he compelled him to assign to the Romans all the fortresses he possessed.

Aristobulus, having no other alternative, did as he was commanded; but he was no sooner released than he hastened to Jerusalem, resolved to defend himself and his capital to the last extremity. As Pompey advanced to the city, however, the gates were opened by the party of Hyrcanus, and the followers of Aristobulus were compelled once more to withdraw to the Temple. In this sacred retreat they were closely besieged by Pompey, whose operations in the siege were greatly facilitated by the strictness with which the Jewish people observed the Sabbath. As they considered it unlawful to take any steps, on that sacred day, to hinder the works or operations of the enemy, the Romans were allowed, without the least molestation, to carry on, during the Sabbath days, their preparations for the assault of the ensuing weeks. By this means they at length, after a siege of three months, carried the Temple by assault, on the very day that the Jews were accustomed to observe as a fast for the taking of the city and Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. During the whole of the siege the service of the Temple was never remitted—the priests being deterred from the performance of their duty neither by the death of their friends, nor the rage of their enemies; and many of them, while officiating at the altar, had their own blood mingled with that of the sacrifices.

Having thus completely subdued Aristobulus and his party, Pompey had the temerity to enter the Temple, even to the Holy of Holies; and it is a remarkable fact, that from that period a succession of reverses attended him which terminated only with his final overthrow by Cæsar, on the plains of Pharsalia. In the sanctuary his admiration was greatly excited by the various curious ob-

jects presented to his view; but he abstained from touching any of the sacred utensils, and even the treasures of the Temple, which amounted to ten thousand talents of gold. He afterwards caused the Temple to be cleansed and purified, and Divine service to be resumed. Before Pompey left Judæa, however, he ordered the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem to be demolished, reduced the country to the condition of a Roman province, and appointed Hyrcanus high-priest and prince; imposing upon him an annual tribute to the Romans, and forbidding him to assume the crown, or to extend his territory beyond its ancient limits. Thus, in 61 A. C., Judæa was subjected to the Romans, and was, with Syria, erected into a province, and left under the government of Scaurus, as prefect, with two legions to preserve order.

When Pompey left Judæa he took Aristobulus, his two sons Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, to grace his triumph at Rome. But Alexander, the eldest son, escaped from his captor during the journey, and returned in safety to his own country. In 57 A. C. he had collected together a sufficient force to seize and garrison several strong fortresses, from which he ravaged the whole country. Jerusalem was now in imminent peril, being without walls, and, therefore, imminently exposed to attack. In this situation Hyrcanus, being forbidden by Roman jealousy either to wall or fortify the city, applied to Gabinius for assistance; and the pro-consul immediately marched an army into Judæa, accompanied by the celebrated Mark Antony, as commander of his cavalry. The Roman troops were soon joined by those of Hyrcanus, under the command of Antipater; and in the battle that followed, Alexander was entirely defeated, and compelled to take refuge in the strong fortress of Alexandrium. Through the mediation of his mother, he

soon after concluded a peace with Gabinius, the principal article of which was, that the fortresses held by him should be surrendered up and demolished.

Gabinius now, under the advice of Antipater, changed the government of Judæa to an aristocracy. The administration of affairs had hitherto been conducted by two sanhedrim, or courts of justice—the inferior consisting of twenty-three members, existed in every city, and was subject to the Grand Sanhedrim of seventy-two members, which sat at Jerusalem. Gabinius dissolved both of these, and established in their place five separate, independent tribunals—at Jerusalem, Jericho, Gadara, Amathus, and Sepphoris—giving to each the power of administering summary justice upon the inhabitants of the several districts of which they were the centre. This arrangement threw the whole power into the hands of the nobles, who presided in these courts, and was very acceptable to the mass of the Jews; for, as they were now anxiously expecting the appearance of the promised Messiah, they were unwilling to have any king reign over them who was not of the house of David.

In 55 A. C. Aristobulus and his younger son Antigonus, escaped from Rome and returned to Judæa, where they were at once welcomed by a large body of adherents, and would, doubtless, have proved successful; but the Roman army, under the command of Gabinius, interfered, and the forces of Aristobulus were defeated, and he and his son made prisoners and sent back to Rome. In the communication, however, accompanying them, Gabinius made such a representation of the service of the mother in suppressing Alexander's insurrection, that the senate liberated all the family but Aristobulus himself. In the following year Crassus, the associate triumvir with Cæsar and Pompey, succeeded Gabinius in the government of Syria;

and immediately after his arrival in Judæa, he marched to Jerusalem with a body of soldiers, and plundered the Temple of the very treasures which Pompey had spared. This sacriligious act was, however, awfully punished in the following year by the terrible overthrow and death which the triumvir met with in the war with the Parthians.

When the civil war, in 49 A. C., commenced between Pompey and Cæsar, the latter, in order to counteract the influence of his rival in Syria, liberated Aristobulus and sent him into Judæa with two Roman legions to regain his crown. But on his way thither he was pursued by some of Pompey's friends; and his son Alexander, who had begun to raise troops to aid his father in his enterprise, was soon after seized, carried to Antioch, and after a mock trial, beheaded. In 47 A. C., two years after, Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus, presented himself before Cæsar, as he was returning through Judæa from his Egyptian campaign, and solicited to be restored to the principality of his father. He bitterly inveighed against both Hyrcanus and Antipater; but the latter being now with Cæsar, so satisfactorily defended himself and Hyrcanus, that the application and accusations of Antigonus were equally disregarded, and Hyrcanus was confirmed in the priesthood, and his princely dignities.

The *real* power in Judæa was, however, at this time, held by Antipater; and though he governed in the name of Hyrcanus, yet everything was done to further his own views and purposes. He had already been admitted to the dignity of Roman citizenship, and he was now appointed procurator of Judæa which invested him with all the important powers of the state. The walls of Jerusalem, which had been demolished by Pompey, were now rebuilt; and such other favors were, through Antipater's influence, extended to the Jews, that, during the life of Cæsar, the

Roman yoke was scarcely felt. Availing himself of the advantages of his position as procurator, and his influence with Cæsar, Antipater at once raised his two sons, Phasael and Herod, to stations of trust and distinction. The former he made governor of Jerusalem, and the latter, of Galilee.

Herod, though only twenty-five years of age, was no sooner settled in his government than he undertook the destruction of the bands of daring robbers by which his province was infested. His sovereign and arbitrary proceedings, however, so displeased the Sanhedrim, that they summoned him to Jerusalem to give an account of his conduct. He appeared before that august tribunal clothed in purple, and attended by a numerous retinue; and such was his haughty and imperious carriage, that he intimidated the whole assembly, with the exception of Sameas, one of its chief counsellors. By a calm and dignified address, this venerable man rekindled their resentment both at his past and present conduct; and Hyrcanus, who was much attached to Herod, perceiving this, adjourned the assembly; and through the advice of that prince, Herod escaped from the city during the following night, and went to Sextus Cæsar, at Damascus, who bestowed upon him the government of Cœle-Syria. Herod now raised an army and entered Judæa, firmly resolved to march to Jerusalem, punish the Sanhedrim, and depose Hyrcanus; but he was persuaded by his father and brother to desist from his revengeful purpose.

After the assassination of Julius Cæsar, Cassius repaired to the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, and was obliged to levy heavy contributions to maintain his vast army. Judæa was assessed seven hundred talents; and Antipater, as procurator, commissioned Herod to raise one half of the sum, and Malichus, one of the principal

supporters of Hyrcanus, the other. Herod advanced himself greatly in the favor of Cassius by the ready payment of his portion; but Malichus being more dilatory, would have been put to death, had not Hyrcanus saved him by paying a hundred talents out of his own coffers. This affair increased the jealousy with which Malichus and other leading Jews regarded the power and authority which Antipater was daily acquiring over the nation. They, therefore, resolved to destroy him and his whole family; and soon after, he was poisoned with a glass of wine, given to him by the high-priest's brother at an entertainment in the palace. Malichus, through the influence of Herod with Cassius, was soon after murdered at Tyre by the Roman soldiers; and, though the party of which he had been the head, countenanced by Hyrcanus himself, still made a desperate struggle to retrieve themselves from the power of Antipater's sons, yet they entirely failed, and their failure only contributed to increase the strength of Herod and Phasael. Herod now bitterly upbraided Hyrcanus for the part he had taken in this affair; but he did not come to any open rupture with him, as he wished, by a marriage with Mariamne, the beautiful and accomplished grand-daughter of the high-priest, to bring into his own family the claims of the Asamonean house.

The party opposed to Herod and Phasael soon found another and more dangerous leader than Malichus had been, in the person of Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus. At the head of a very considerable army, he came to claim his father's throne; but soon after he arrived in Judæa he was entirely defeated by Herod, and obliged, for the time, to abandon his enterprise. In the following year, 42 A. C., after the decisive battle of Philippi, Mark Antony passed over into Asia, to secure that important region to the conquerers. Having served in

Syria before, he was well acquainted with the Jewish people and their leaders; and, therefore, when a deputation of a hundred influential Jews came to him at Daphne, near Antioch, with complaints against the usurping sons of Antipater, he readily gave them a hearing. After listening patiently to their complaints, Antony turned to Hyrcanus, who was present, and asked him whom *he* thought most worthy to govern the state under him. Hyrcanus, to the general surprise of the deputation, immediately named Phasael and Herod; and Antony, who well remembered the services of Antipater, accordingly, raised the two brothers to the rank of tetrarchs, and committed the affairs of Judæa to their administration.

The Parthians soon after gained temporary possession of Syria; and Antigonus, who was far from being disheartened by his late reverses, engaged their assistance by the promise of a thousand talents, and five hundred Jewish female slaves. He now advanced, at the head of a powerful army, against Jerusalem, and by desperate efforts, succeeded in recovering his kingdom. Herod managed to escape the conquerer; but Hyrcanus and Phasael were made prisoners and thrown into a dungeon. Phasael, apprehending his fate, dashed his own brains out against the prison walls; and Antigonus cruelly cropped his aged uncle's ears, in order to unfit him for the high-priesthood: he then committed him to the care of the Parthians, who took him to Seleucia, in Babylonia. In the mean time Herod found his way to Rome; and was soon after, through the influence of his friend Antony, whom he there found in the zenith of his glory, crowned in the capital, king of Judæa, with the full approbation of both Octavius and the senate.

Though thus publicly recognized at Rome as king of Judæa, Herod had still to gain possession of his kingdom,

which he found not an easy task; for, though the Romans were again masters of Syria, yet the assistance they could now afford him did him more harm than good. The war, therefore, lingered on with various success for nearly three years; and at the expiration of that time, finding that he had tolerably well secured Galilee and Samaria, he resolved to lead his forces against Jerusalem. While engaged in the siege of that city, Herod consummated his marriage with Mariamne, whom he had espoused four years before—hoping, by this step, to reconcile the Jewish people to his government. The siege advanced but slowly, until Herod was joined by Sosius, the president of Syria, whom Antony had sent to his assistance with so considerable a force as to raise the investing army to sixty thousand men. After a vigorous siege of six months, the city was taken by storm; and the obstinacy of their resistance so exasperated the Roman soldiers that they pillaged the place, massacred the inhabitants without mercy, and would have utterly destroyed the city, had not Herod ransomed it with gold.

As soon as Antigonus saw that all was lost, he surrendered himself a prisoner to Sosius; and, showing less of the hero than had been anticipated, he was treated by the Roman commander with utter contempt. Being sent in chains to Antioch, he was there, soon after, at the desire of Herod, put to death with a degree of contumely that never had before been shown to a crowned head. With his death terminated the Asamonean dynasty, after an existence of one hundred and twenty-six years, and in 37 A. C. While their leaders were contending with the foreign enemies of their country, the smile of Divine favor attended them; but when their quarrels became domestic, the Almighty permitted them speedily to work out their own destruction. Still, to the very last, the great mass

of the Jewish people evinced the most devoted, and even obstinate attachment to the family; and it was because nothing would induce them to acknowledge a king of another family, while Antigonus lived, that Herod resolved to procure his death.

THE WEST.

146 FALL OF CORINTH.

THE GRACCHI (133–121).
Scipio (d. 129).

125

JUGURTHINE WAR (112–106).

100

Marius (d. 86).
Sulla (d. 78).

75

1st TRIUMVIRATE
Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus (60).

50 PHARSALIA (48).
Cæsar dictator.
His death (44).
2d TRIUMVIRATE
Octavius, Antony, Lepidus.
ACTIUM (31).
25 AUGUSTUS (30).

VIRGIL.
HORACE.
LIVY.
(1) OVID.
Strabo.
Tiberius (14).
Seneca.
25 Propertius.
Persius.
Caligula (37).
Claudius (41).
50 PLINY.
NERO (54).
JEVENAL.
Galba (68).
70 VESPASIAN.

THE HEBREWS IN ROME.

FALL OF CARTHAGE, 146 B.C.

Jonathan II. (161).
Simon III. (143).
John Hyrcanus (135).

KINGDOM (111)

(*Kings*)
Aristobulus I. (107).

OF THE MACCABEES.

Alexander (105).
Alexandra (79).
Aristobulus (70).
Hyrcanus II. (63).
Pompey makes Judæa a Roman province (63 B.C.)
John Hyrcanus (63).

HEROD (40–4).

PALESTINE

Archelaus (4 B.C.)
Birth of Christ (4 B.C.)

(*Governors.*)
Coponius (7 A.D.)
Mar. Ambivius.
Annius Rufus.

A ROMAN PROVINCE.

Val. Gratus (14).
Pilate (25–35).
John the Baptist.
The Crucifixion (33 A.D.)
Herod Antipas (35).
Herod Agrippa (37).
Agrippa (younger) (44).
Jerusalem taken by Titus (70).

JERUSALEM TAKEN, 70 A.D., AND FINAL DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

HIGH-PRIESTS (146-107); KINGS (107-4); ROMAN GOVERNORS (4 B.C.-70 A.D.)

In 146 B.C., ROME, the FOURTH BEAST OF DANIEL'S VISION, by the overthrow of Macedon, Greece, and Carthage, became the ruling Empire of the world. It embraced all the countries in Europe, Asia and Africa which surround the Mediterranean Sea.

The boundaries of this Empire, in the Age of Augustus, were the Tigris on the East, and the Atlantic on the West; the Rhine, Danube, and Dneister on the North, and the great deserts of Arabia and Africa at the South.

MELCHI. LEVI.—*LINE*—MATTHAT.—*OF*—HELI.—*DAVID*.—MARY. *CHRIST*.

THE EAST.

Ptolemy VIII. Demetrius II. 146

Antiochus Grypus. 125
Mithridates VI. (120–64).
Ptolemy IX. (117).

100

Seleucus (95).
Mithradatic War (87–64).
Ptolemy X. 75

Syria conquered by Pompey (63).

Cleopatra (51). 50

Philippi (bat. 42).

Egypt conquered by Rome (30).

Herod rebuilds Samaria. 25
Herod plunders the temple (9).
Death of Herod (4 B.C.)

(1)

Christ reasons with the doctors (8).

Philo of Alexandria. 25
The Apostles.
Herod's persecution (41).
New Testament.
Paul in Jerusalem, Greece and Rome (45–66). 50
Persecution by Nero (64).

JOSEPHUS (37–93). 70

CHAPTER THE NINTH

DYNASTY OF HEROD.

SECTION I.

HEROD THE GREAT:—His cruel and sanguinary disposition—Death of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus—OCTAVIUS master of the Roman Empire—Herod reconciled to him, and confirmed in the Kingdom of Judæa—Death of Alexandra. and his wife, Mariamne—His preference for Grecian and Roman customs—Two of his sons sent to Rome, to be educated—Rebuilding of Samaria, and building of Cæsarea—The new Temple, and other magnificent buildings—Misunderstanding with Augustus—General Taxation—Birth of JESUS CHRIST—Herod's awful death.

HEROD, surnamed the Great, ascended the throne of Judæa 37 A. C., and in the thirty-third year of his age. The son of Antipater, he was an Idumæan by extraction; and though a Jew by profession, he was really a heathen at heart. He commenced his reign by an unrelenting persecution of the former adherents of Antigonus, the most affluent of whom were put to death and their estates openly confiscated.

The cruelty which Herod thus manifested in the very beginning of his reign, rendered both his person and his government hateful to the Jews; and this hatred rose to abhorrence when the objects of the people's affections, the last remains of the noble house of the Asamoneans, became the victims of his murderous acts. Old Hyrcanus, who had been exiled to Babylonia, and was there treated with the greatest respect, both by the influential Jews who resided in that country, and by the Parthians themselves, was induced, by his deceptions, to return to Jerusalem. For a short time after his arrival in his native city, Herod

treated him with apparent respect, and even deference; but no sooner did a convenient opportunity offer, than he caused him to be inhumanly put to death. This base act occurred in 31 A. C.; and when we remember what Hyrcanus had been to both Herod and his father Antipater, the cruelty of the deed must appear beyond expression great.

The lineal representative of the Asamonean house, after the death of Hyrcanus, was Aristobulus, the brother of Herod's beloved wife, Mariamne. This child soon grew up to be a youth of extraordinary beauty and promise, and was naturally hateful to Herod; but his life and welfare were supposed to be sufficiently protected by his near relationship to Mariamne. His right to the high-priesthood, which Herod had bestowed upon an obscure priest of the name of Ananel, was unquestioned; and when the king perceived that it was unsafe longer to withhold the pontificate from him, he removed Ananel, and placed Aristobulus, who was then only seventeen years of age, in that exalted office. When he appeared in his gorgeous pon tifical robes at the Feast of Tabernacles, the assembled multitude could not restrain an expression of their admiration and delight; and that expression of public affection sealed his doom. Aristobulus was soon after drowned, as was said, "by accident," while bathing, at Jericho; but the whole nation knew that it was Herod's act, and saw through the show of mourning, and the parade of grief which he displayed on the occasion.

The circumstances attending the death of Aristobulus having been communicated by his mother, Alexandra, to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, the latter induced Antony, who was then at her court, to order Herod to appear before him and vindicate himself against the charge of the murder. Herod, with large gifts, soon appeased the wrath of An-

tony; but before he left Jerusalem to meet the great Roman, his jealousy led him to place Mariamne, whom he devotedly loved, in the charge of his uncle Joseph, with strict directions, that should he be put to death, she must not be permitted to survive him. This order Joseph inadvertently communicated to Mariamne; and upon Herod's return, that virtuous and high-spirited princess bitterly reproached him for his unfounded suspicions of her. This threw Herod into so great a rage that he drew his dagger and would have murdered her on the spot; but his ardent affection for her proved her protection, though to appease his wrath he ordered his uncle Joseph to be instantly executed.

In 31 A. C., while these scenes were passing in Judæa, the decisive battle of Actium occurred between Antony and Octavius; and as, in that action, the power of the former was entirely prostrated, he fled to Egypt, to console himself in the caresses of the treacherous Cleopatra. Thither Octavius immediately pursued him; and as Antony's death, by his own hand, soon followed, his rival was left master of the whole Roman empire. It now became Herod, who had hitherto been attached to the fortunes of Antony, to seek reconciliation with Octavius; and with this view he repaired to Alexandria, in Egypt, where the conquerer then was, and so artfully excused himself for his attachment to Antony, that Octavius not only granted him a free pardon, but confirmed him in his government and authority.

Herod returned from Egypt flushed with his success with Octavius; but he found that, during his absence, his domestic troubles had only increased. He had, before his departure thither, left Mariamne in the charge of Sohemus, with similar directions to those which he had given, on the previous occasion, to his uncle Joseph. When he, therefore,

immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem, exultingly flew to her embrace, she repulsed him with abhorrence, and upbraided him, not only with his treatment of herself, but also with the murder of her grand-father, her father, her brother, and her uncle. Herod's rage and jealousy now knew no bounds; for he perceived that his secret had again been betrayed, and he therefore caused Sohemas to be immediately executed, and Mariamne brought to a public trial. As the judges were his own creatures she was, of course, condemned; but no sooner had the magnanimous and virtuous woman perished, than Herod's remorse and grief became intolerable. He found no rest day nor night; for wherever he went, the image of Mariamne haunted him, and filled his mind with anguish so bitter, that it eventually resulted in fits of temporary insanity. He, therefore, relinquished all the cares of government and retired to Samaria, soon after which he was seized with so dangerous a fit of sickness that his life was despaired of. Alexandra, supposing that his death was certain, began to intrigue for the supreme power, under the pretext of securing the government for Mariamne's children; but Herod unexpectedly recovering, returned to Jerusalem, and ordered her immediate execution. Thus perished, in 28 A. C., Alexandra, the mother of the beautiful and accomplished Mariamne.

Aware that these repeated and sanguinary murders had awakened the bitterest antipathies of the Jews towards him, Herod now began to treat both their religion and their laws with utter neglect. Not being a Levite himself, nor even by birth a Jew, he did not venture to seize the high-priesthood; but he degraded that sacred office by subjecting it entirely to his will, appointing and removing the high-priests at his pleasure. He even so far inclined to the Roman customs and practices, that he gave them every-

where a preference to those of his own country; and in all parts of his kingdom except in Judæa, he built temples in the Grecian style of art, and set up statues for idolatrous worship. He even went so far as to build in the very city of Jerusalem, a magnificent theatre, and an amphitheatre, for the celebration of games in honor of the emperor Augustus; which, it is well known, implied the deification of the person in whose honor the games were celebrated. By such means he soon imparted the luxuries and vices of the licentious Romans to his own subjects.

These measures of Herod, so offensive, and even insulting, to the great body of the Jewish people, produced numerous conspiracies against his life; to guard against which required the greatest vigilance and activity, and led to the building and fortifying of other strongholds besides Jerusalem. The first place selected for this purpose was Samaria, which, since its destruction by John Hyrcanus, had not risen beyond a small village. The place being rebuilt, and the fortifications completed, Herod named it *Sebaste*, in honor of his patron Augustus—*Sebastos*, in Greek, being equivalent to *Augustus*, in Latin. Here he planted a colony of six thousand people, among whom he divided the surrounding country, which, being very fertile, the place soon became rich and populous.

The great work of rebuilding and repeopling Samaria was scarcely completed, before Judæa was visited by a famine and pestilence, so severe, as to sweep off vast numbers of the inhabitants. To relieve those that escaped, Herod resorted to the popular and praiseworthy act of melting down and turning into money the plate of his palace, and sending to Egypt to purchase corn. The quantity of food thus obtained was so abundant, as amply to supply all the wants, not only of his own subjects, but also of the neighboring Syrians who were suffering under

the same calamity. As the same cause which had deprived his people of the means of subsistence, had also cut off their flocks, a scarcity of wool for clothing was the consequence; and Herod, therefore, caused large quantities of garments to be imported from foreign countries to supply the deficiency. These acts of generous care for the welfare of the people greatly won upon their affections, and acquired for the king, among surrounding nations, the reputation of a wise and beneficent prince; and had it not been for his excessive pride and jealousy, doubtless, more frequent instances of such noble conduct would have been exhibited by him.

The relief which the occupation of rebuilding Samaria had afforded to Herod's troubled mind, together with the prosperous condition of the country and the present favorable state of the public mind towards him, induced him now to increase the magnificence of various parts of his kingdom, by other important improvements. The first of these was a stately palace on Mount Zion, the most elevated part of Jerusalem. The splendor and magnificence of this edifice was such as to rival even the Temple itself. It contained, besides many other apartments, two spacious halls much more sumptuous than the rest; and to one of these he gave the name of *Cæsareum*, in honor of Augustus, and to the other *Agrippeum*, in honor of Agrippa, the emperor's chief favorite. This city palace was no sooner completed, than Herod commenced the building of another for his country residence, on a beautiful hill about seven miles from Jerusalem; and when the structure was completed, he named it *Herodium*, after himself. He next turned his attention towards the building of a city on the sea-coast, at a place called *Straton's Tower*, the name of which he changed to *Cæsarea*, in honor of Cæsar. The harbor of this place, though the best on the coast, had

hitherto been so dangerous, that when the wind was from the south-west no ship could ride in it in safety; but by running a mole of circular form in that direction, he made it safe and commodious, and sufficiently capacious to accommodate a large fleet. The expense of this mole, or break-water, was enormous; for many of the stones used in its construction, were brought from a great distance, and were of almost incredible dimensions—some of them being fifty feet long, eighteen feet broad, and nine feet thick.

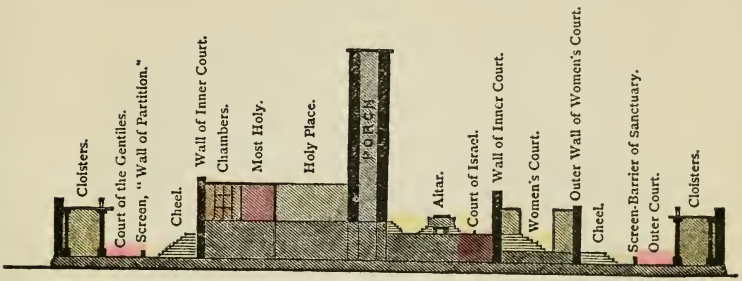
In 21 A. C., while Herod was engaged in these magnificent works at Cæsarea, the emperor Augustus visited the East; and when he arrived at Antioch, Herod waited upon him, and was received with the most flattering kindness. As additional marks of his favor the emperor, before he left the East, increased Herod's dominions, by the addition of the provinces of Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanæa; and he also made him tetrarch of Syria, with such powers that the governor of that important country undertook no enterprise without his concurrence. Alexander and Aristobulus, the sons of Herod by Mariamne, were soon after sent to Rome to be educated. They were committed to the particular care of Pollio, an intimate friend; but Augustus, as soon as he heard of their arrival, caused them, as a special mark of friendship to their father, to be removed to apartments in his own palace, and treated as members of the imperial family.

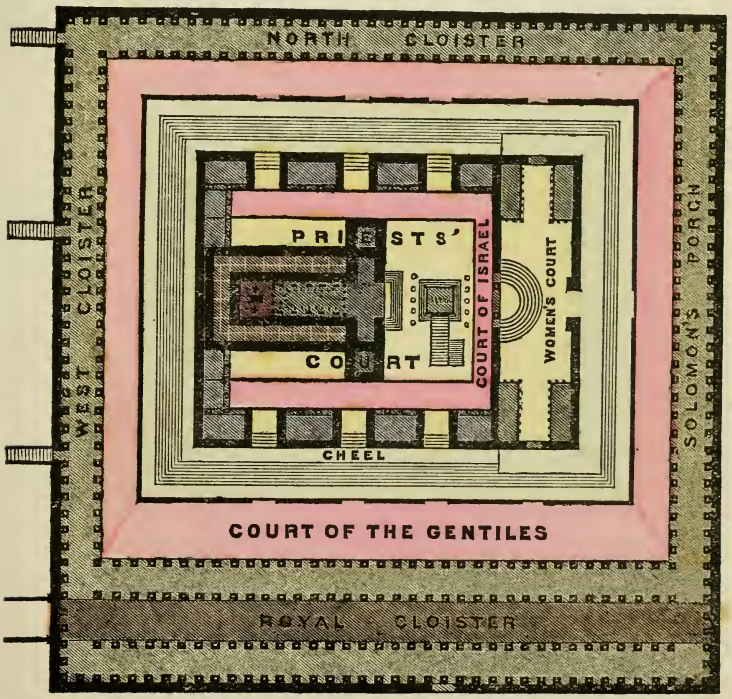
In 19 A. C., after having been employed twelve years in the work, Herod completed the building of Cæsarea and returned to Jerusalem. Pride and ambition, and not piety or zeal, now led him to conceive the design of rebuilding the Temple, in hopes of conciliating, by this measure, the affections of the Jewish people, by whom he had always been secretly held in detestation. He, therefore called them together in general assembly, and informed

them of what he proposed to do; but they were alarmed at his proposal, fearing that when he had destroyed the old building, he would refuse to erect another. To quiet their fears, and to obtain their consent to the project, he, therefore promised not to begin to remove the old Temple till all the materials for the new one were prepared. The preparations for this important work occupied two years; and at the expiration of that time the old building was pulled down, and the new one commenced.

The building of the new Temple was begun in 18 A. C., and in the twenty-third year of Herod's reign; and though all the materials had been previously prepared and brought to the spot, yet such was the splendor of the structure, that for nine and a-half years eighteen thousand men were employed upon it, without completing the work. The sanctuary, or the actual Temple itself, was finished in a year and a-half; and the rest of the pile, with its courts, porticoes, offices, and outer buildings, were sufficiently far advanced during the eight following years for the usual services of religion; but the whole work was not finished till long after the death of Herod. This was the Temple which Christ and his apostles so often visited; and it seems to have been, in many respects, a much more magnificent pile than the Temple built by Solomon, though it may not have equalled that celebrated structure in its wealth of gold. It was built of large blocks of white marble; and, rising in all its grandeur from the summit of an eminence, it formed the most conspicuous object, in a general view, of the city, and excited the admiration of all beholders. The exterior was covered profusely with solid plates of gold; and when the rays of the sun were reflected from it, it shone like a meteor, upon which the eye could not rest. The noble porticoes, which surrounded the Temple courts, also excited no small share of admiring wonder.

From "Life of Jesus, the Christ," by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.





SOUTH.

PLAN AND SECTION OF THE TEMPLE.

Incalculable wealth was expended upon them, and the most refined taste was gratified by grace of form and proportion, by vast extent, by costliness of materials, and by every variety of beauty of embellishment which imagination could devise, or art execute.

Besides the Temple and other great works already mentioned, Herod built so many new cities in Judæa, and restored so many old ones, constructed so many bridges, roads, baths, and aqueducts, that the whole country under his reign assumed a new aspect. Nor did he confine his munificence to his own dominions; but with a view to spread a report of his magnificence through the Roman empire, he surrounded many foreign cities with walls, built within them porticoes, gymnasiums, theatres, temples, baths, bazaars, and aqueducts, besides adorning them with the most beautiful groves. Such works justly entitle Herod to the epithet *great;* but for all of them, with the exception of the Temple, the people, while they groaned under the exactions which their cost required, could be little grateful to him.

During these extensive improvements in his own and surrounding countries, Herod, in 16 A. C., went to Rome, to pay his respects to Augustus, and to visit his sons Alexander and Aristobulus. He was received by the emperor with great kindness, and with every mark of distinction to which, from his exalted position, he was entitled; and finding that his sons' education was now completed, he soon after carried them back with him to Judæa. In the course of the following year Alexander married Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia; and Aristobulus, Berenice, the daughter of Herod's own sister Salome. These young men, in consequence of their great accomplishments, the elegance of their persons, and the agreeableness of their manners, soon became the ad-

miration of all Jerusalem; and this was a sufficient reason for the wicked, intriguing Salome to pursue them with the same envy and jealousy which she had always shown towards their mother, Mariamne, and which eventuated in the death of that accomplished princess.

Salome and her brother Pheroras, now united their efforts to fill the old king's mind with suspicions and prejudices against Alexander and Aristobulus—representing to him that they were perpetually boasting of their descent from the great Asamonean family, and claiming the favor of the people, as the only surviving representatives of that illustrious race. These misrepresentations, together with other audacious falsehoods of a similar character, being perpetually sounded into Herod's ears, they drove the old tyrant almost to distraction. He wrote to Augustus informing him of the conduct of his sons, and requesting permission to call a council for their public trial. The permission was granted; the council held, and the young men condemned; and as the execution of the sentence was left to Herod himself, he sent them to Sebaste, there to be strangled to death. Thus, through the envy and malice of a wicked, intriguing woman, died, in 6 A. C., the last two representatives of the illustrious house of the Asamoneans. The year following the death of these two accomplished young princes, was signalized by the birth of *John the Baptist*—the harbinger of the long-promised MESSIAH.

Up to this period the friendship between Herod and Augustus had continued without interruption; but a quarrel between Herod and Obodas, king of Arabia Petræa, was represented to the emperor in such a light as greatly to incense him against Herod; and he, therefore, informed that prince that he should no longer be treated as a friend, but as a subject. Cyrenius was, accordingly, sent as a com-

missioner into Judæa to register the taxable population, with a view to the imposition of that capitation tax usually paid by the inhabitants of the subject provinces, but from which Herod's dominions had hitherto been exempted. The registration was completed; but as proper explanations, in the mean time, restored the good understanding between Herod and the emperor, the tax itself was not imposed.

The decree of registration required that the people should repair to their paternal towns to be enrolled; and many persons, therefore, who had settled in other places, were now compelled to journey for this purpose to the seat of the families to which they belonged. Those of the house and lineage of David repaired to Bethlehem; and among them was a carpenter named Joseph, with his wife Mary, from Nazareth, in Galilee. As the public inn was too much crowded by previous arrivals to afford them any accommodation, they were compelled to lodge in the stable which belonged to it. In that unpropitious place Mary gave birth to a son, and cradled him in the manger. That son was JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD—THE LONG PROMISED MESSIAH. Though so humble his illustrious birth, yet it was attended with such heavenly celebration as became its importance; for hosts of rejoicing angels chanted in mid-air over Bethlehem, the anthem of PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TO MEN, and directed the shepherds, who were watching their flocks at night on the adjacent plains, to the birth-place of the REDEEMER of a lost world.

Soon after these important events had transpired at Bethlehem, three sages from the distant East arrived at Jerusalem, inquiring for the new-born king of the Jews; saying that they "had seen his star, and had come to worship him." When Herod heard of the arrival of these strangers, he sent for them, and directed them to ascertain the birth-place of the "new-born king," and bring him

word, pretending that he also desired to go and worship him. The sages soon after found the object of their solicitude in the manger of Bethlehem; but "being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." The jealousy of the old tyrant had been awakened by the inquiry of the sages for "the king of the Jews;" and as, by their not returning to Jersalem, he was prevented from distinguishing the object of their homage, he, in his ungovernable rage and inhumanity, ordered all the children of Bethlehem under two years of age to be put to death, trusting that his intended victim would fall in the general slaughter. Joseph had, however, by Divine direction, previously taken Mary and the infant into the land of Egypt; and they did not return thence till after Herod's death.

The murder of the innocent children of Bethlehem filled up the measure of Herod's iniquity; and he was, accordingly, soon after seized with a distemper that in a few weeks terminated his wicked life. The disease was of such a nature as not only to bring upon him the most dreadful tortures, but also to render his person loathsome both to himself and to all by whom he was surrounded. Even this severity of punishment was not sufficient to subdue the natural ferocity of his temper. He was at that time at Jericho, whither he summoned the chief men of his kingdom to attend him; and being aware that his death would be a cause of unutterable joy to the great body of the nation, he ordered that all whom he had thus brought together should be confined in the circus, and as soon as his own death should be announced, indiscriminately slain. In this inconceivably barbarous manner he proposed to provide mourners for his funeral; but, wicked as Salome his sister, and her husband Alexis, to whom this order had been given, were, they were still not base

enough to commit an act of such unprecedented cruelty. After lingering for a few days at Jericho under the most exquisite tortures, Herod there died, in the seventieth year of his age, and thirty-eighth of his reign—equally renowned for the magnitude of his public works, and for his unparalleled jealousy, pride, and cruelty.

SECTION II.

HEROD PHILIP—HEROD AGRIPPA—Herodias—Division of the Kingdom of Herod the Great—ARCHELAUS, King of Judæa—His Cruelties—His banishment and death—Judæa a Roman Province—Pontius Pilate—JESUS CHRIST—John the Baptist—His Baptism—His Imprisonment and death—CHRIST'S public Ministry—His Trial and Crucifixion.

HEROD THE GREAT having had nine wives, left, at his death, a numerous offspring; but of these it is necessary to notice those only who are mentioned in the Scriptures. By his wife Malthace he had Archelaus and Herod Antipas; by Cleopatra, Philip; and by his beloved Mariamne, besides Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had caused to be put to death, he had Herod Philip. Aristobulus left a son called Herod Agrippa, and a daughter named Herodias. This Herod was the prince who put the apostle James to death, and who was soon after smitten of God at Cæsarea for his impious pride. Herodias first married her uncle, Herod Philip; but she afterwards left him and became the wife of Herod Antipas. By Herod Philip she had a daughter named Salome, whose dancing was the immediate cause of the death of John the Baptist. Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great, left a son also named Agrippa, and two daughters, Drusilla and Berenice. The former became the wife

of that Felix before whom the apostle Paul preached of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Herod the Great, by his will, divided his dominions among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip. To Archelaus he bequeathed Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa, which properly constituted his kingdom; to Antipas he left the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea; and to Philip, the tetrarchy of the territory formed by the districts of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, Batanæa, and Paneas. This distribution was confirmed by Augustus, though he recognized Archelaus as ethnarch only, and not as king. The Jews, however, regarded him as their sovereign, and entertained the most favorable anticipations of his reign. But they were sadly deceived; for one of his first public acts was the refusal of some popular demand; and to quiet the commotion which this refusal produced, he ordered his soldiers into the Temple, and by them three thousand of the people were deliberately put to the sword.

By this and other similar acts of cruelty, Archelaus revived the general unpopularity of the government of the Herodian family; and, therefore, when those of that family, interested in the will of the late Herod, repaired to Rome to prosecute their claims, the Jewish people also sent thither a deputation, to petition that they might no longer be harassed by a show of independence, but might be permitted to live according to their own laws, under a Roman governor. Their suit was, however, refused, and the will of Herod was confirmed. This fruitless attempt of the Jews to be relieved of the oppressive yoke of Archelaus, only caused that tyrant to treat them with the greater severity. This naturally produced fresh disorders; and for some years the whole land was kept in commotion by pretenders to the crown, and by powerful

bands of brigands, by whom communication between the different parts of the country was almost entirely interrupted. The maladministration of Archelaus, and his unfitness to govern, at length became so evident, that the complaints constantly sent to Rome against him were no longer treated with neglect; and he was, accordingly, in the tenth year of his reign, deposed, and banished to Vienne, in Gaul.

Judæa was now reduced to the form of a Roman province, annexed to Syria, and governed by Roman procurators. The tribute hitherto paid to the king was henceforth to be paid to the Romans; and justice, even to the cases of life and death, was to be administered according to the laws of Rome. The procurators were appointed by the emperor, and the place of their residence was Cæsarea, which now became the capital of the province. At the great festivals the procurator usually went to Jerusalem, attended by some cohorts of soldiers, in order to be able to repress any disturbance which might arise in so vast a concourse of discontented people. Six cohorts of Roman soldiers were constantly kept in the country, five of which were stationed at Cæsarea, and one at Jerusalem. The duty of the procurator was, to maintain good order in his province, to collect the imperial revenues, and to administer justice. Some of them held independent jurisdiction, while others were dependent on the general governor of Syria, whose residence was at Antioch.

The tribute paid by this arrangement directly to the Romans, was particularly galling to the Jews, many of whom insisted that it was "unlawful" for the chosen people of God to pay tribute to the heathen. Those who held this doctrine were called "zealots;" and under this name they are to be known, in the few sad pages that remain of Jewish history. They incited numerous insurrections

against the Roman government, or united in formidable bodies of brigands; and considering all those Jews who were willing to submit to the Romans as unworthy of the name, they treated them as common enemies. This necessarily produced increased disorder, insecurity, and rapine. It must not, however, be supposed that this detestation of paying tribute to the Romans was confined to the "zealots;" for even the more quietly disposed submitted to the Roman yoke with the greatest reluctance. Hence those Jews who assisted in the collection of the tribute, and were called "publicans," were regarded as betrayers of their country's liberties, and were universally detested. This feeling naturally threw the office of collector into the hands of men whose conduct, generally, justified the dislike with which they were regarded.

It must, however, be confessed, that it was the lofty notions which the Jews entertained of their national privileges as the peculiar people of God, rather than any enlarged and enlightened views of public liberty, that fostered those feelings of hatred to the Roman government, which they now evinced with so little reserve. The Romans, it is true, were idolators, and were, therefore, looked upon by the Jews with disgust, as polluted and abominable men, with whom they could not sit at the same table, nor mingle in any social intercourse. This marked and avowed abhorrence of the Jews to the persons of the Romans, was little calculated to produce, in that overbearing people, any kindness of feeling towards them as their tributaries; and, perhaps, had it not been for their national peculiarities and prejudices, the Jews would have had no good reason to complain of the treatment they received. They were allowed the free exercise of their own religious rites; they worshipped in their Temple and synagogues, without restraint; they followed their own customs,

and were still, in a great measure, governed by their own laws.

While these important changes were taking place in Judæa, Herod Antipas and Philip continued to govern their respective territories without the direct intervention of the Romans. Herod sedulously cultivated the friendship of the emperor Tiberius, who succeeded Augustus, in 14 A. D., and gave *his* name to the city which he built on the western border of lake Gennessareth. The lake itself, from this circumstance, soon after acquired the same name.

In Judæa, a number of procurators rapidly followed each other, all of whom, almost without exception, were men of the basest character. None of them, however, require any particular notice, until 25 A. D., when Pontius Pilate was appointed by the emperor to that important office. He was an impious, selfish, sanguinary, and obstinate tyrant; and without disguise, sold justice, plundered the people, and slew the innocent. Although the abhorrence in which idolatrous images were held by the Jews was perfectly well known to him, still he persisted in bringing into Jerusalem the images which were on the military ensigns; and, by this and other acts of insult and oppression, he caused frequent tumults among those even of the Jewish people who were the most inclined to submit to the Roman government. But the chief circumstance which rendered the administration of Pilate memorable, is the public appearance, ministry, and death of our LORD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST.

The wonderful circumstances attending the birth of Christ, have already been noticed. Of his life, from that period till the thirtieth year of his age, when he commenced his public ministry, little farther is known than that he lived with his reputed parents at Nazareth, in Galilee, to which town they had returned as soon as the death of Herod

rendered it safe for them to leave Egypt; and his memorable visit to Jerusalem, when he was twelve years of age. His actual appearance as the expected Messiah, was harbingered by John the Baptist, who had lived in the solitudes of the wilderness, clad in camel's hair, and subsisting on locusts and wild honey. This remarkable personage now came thence to the river Jordan, and there, by preaching repentance and remission of sin, with the baptism of multitudes of those who flocked to hear him, attracted the greatest attention. In the midst of the interest thus excited, and while many began to regard John himself as the expected Messiah, he publicly announced that he was merely the precursor of ONE, "the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose."

A general expectation was at this time prevalent among the Jewish people, that the time for the appearance of the long-desired Messiah, the DELIVERER of their nation, was at hand. This expectation was founded on a calculation of the time of his appearance, as mentioned by the prophet Daniel; but the Jews were utterly mistaken in their conception of Messiah's real character and office. They supposed that he was to appear as a great and glorious monarch, claiming his place upon the throne of David, and at once scattering his enemies before him, relieving them from the oppression of their oppressors, and placing them at the head of the nations of the earth. This expectation was one of the chief circumstances that made the nation at this time so impatient of the Roman yoke.

With such expectations the great body of the Jews, and especially the proud and self-confident Pharisees, were little prepared to recognize the Messiah in that meek and lowly personage whom the Baptist soon after pointed out as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The thick mist that had settled upon their eyes,

and had overshadowed all their senses, rendered them incapable of perceiving or understanding that Messiah's mission was indescribably more glorious than that which their carnal and worldly minds had assigned him—that he came to ransom mankind from their lost condition — to bring into the world a hope of immortality—to furnish mankind with higher and purer motives, feelings, and principles of action, than had yet been known on earth, or dreamed of by the wisest philosophers. They, indeed, witnessed, with wonder, his acts of raising the dead, of healing, with a word, all manner of diseases, of giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and of feeding thousands with the bread of few; and even confessed that no man ever spake as he spoke, or did such miraculous things as he did; yet they refused to receive him as "the Christ of God."

The opposition of the nation to Christ as the Messiah, was greatly increased by the extraordinary claim which he, as the Son, advanced, of an entire equality with God the Father, and by the declaration which he repeatedly uttered of the approaching termination of the Mosaical dispensation. The first they regarded as blasphemous arrogance; and the last was so abhorrent to their feelings, and so opposed to those rooted opinions by which the national pride was flattered, that they could not, for a moment, endure the idea. His unsparing reproofs, too, of the reigning sins, vices, and crimes contributed not only to his rejection, but even rendered him an object of hatred to the teachers and rulers of the people. They, therefore, resolved to effect his death; but the purity of his life baffled all their schemes, until it occurred to them to charge him with the political crime of sedition. This charge, as they had not the power of life and death in their own hands, they preferred against him before Pilate, the Roman

governor; and though that wicked tyrant well knew that he was entirely innocent, yet, being anxious to gratify the Jewish people, and fearful of the impression which the jealous and suspicious Tiberius might receive from their accounts of the transaction, he, with apparent reluctance, yielded to their wishes, and condemned him to death. In doing so, however, he vainly sought to clear his own hands from the stain of innocent blood, and to cast it upon the heads of his persecutors. They received it gladly, and in the frenzy of their madness, shouted, "His blood be on us and on our children"—and awfully was that imprecation upon themselves soon after fulfilled.

The execution of Christ occurred at the Passover, three years after the commencement of his public ministry, and 33 A. D. In that act of blood, the doom of the Jewish nation was sealed. The rent vail of the Temple indicated the end of the Mosaical dispensation, and the completion of the purposes for which the descendants of Abraham had hitherto been preserved as a nation. The light of Israel went out in that darkness which overspread the land, when the dying Saviour cried, "It is finished." Though deposited in a tomb, even the grave itself could not retain him. On the third day he rose, and after showing himself on several occasions to his followers, and eating with them, he, on the fortieth day, ascended, visibly, up into Heaven. At the feast of Pentecost, which soon after occurred, he sent down upon his chosen disciples the Holy Spirit to enlighten them, and to qualify them for preaching his doctrines to all the world.

SECTION III.

The Recall of PILATE—His banishment and death—King HEROD AGRIPPA—His efforts to conciliate the Jews—His death—Judæa again a Roman Province—FELIX—FESTUS—ALBINUS—FLORUS—The Outbreak at Cæsarea—Its Cause and Consequences—Defeat of Cestius Gallius—VESPASIAN at the head of the Syrian Army—Succeeded by his son, TITUS—Fall and destruction of Jerusalem—Dispersion of the Jewish Nation.

FROM this eventful period in the history of the Jewish people, everything concerning them is attended with gloom and disaster. Christ himself, a short time before his crucifixion, had predicted that the existing generation should not pass away, before the city and Temple would be destroyed, and the people suffer the most fearful calamities. Pilate retained his government until 37 A. D., and continued his oppressions and exactions with the most rigorous severity. Among other things, he attempted to drain the treasury of the Temple, by making it chargeable with the expenses of carrying an aqueduct into Jerusalem. His oppressions at length became so intolerable, that they could no longer be borne; and the Samaritans, upon the grossest outrage being committed upon them, joined with the Jews, and laid such complaints before Vitellius, the governor of Syria, that he ordered Pilate home to Rome, to give an account of his conduct to the emperor. Tiberius died before his arrival, and Caligula, his successor, banished him to Vienne, in Gaul, where he soon after perished by his own hands. During the short interim that followed the removal of Pilate, the office of procurator was filled by Marcellus, under appointment from Vitellius; but Caligula soon after sent out Marullus to fill the place.

It will be remembered that the two sons of the Asamonean Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, were put to death by their unnatural father, Herod the Great. Aristobulus

left a son, named Herod Agrippa, who was sent to Rome, and brought up in the imperial family. As he advanced to manhood, he attached himself to Caligula, the heir apparent to the throne of the empire; and having, in his familiar intercourse with that young prince, unguardedly expressed a wish that his friend might soon become emperor, the old tyrant Tiberius threw him into prison, and loaded him with chains. When Caligula, soon after, became emperor, one of his first acts was to release Herod Agrippa from prison, and bestow upon him a chain of gold, equal in weight to the one that he had been compelled to wear for *his* sake. He then bestowed upon him the tetrarchy of his late uncle Philip, together with that of Abilene, with the title of king. This unexpected advancement of his nephew was highly offensive to Herod Antipas; and he, therefore, repaired to Rome, to endeavor to obtain the royal title for himself. A report of his crimes had, however, preceded him thither; and instead of obtaining the crown, he was sent to join Pilate, at Vienne, and his territory was given to the fortunate Agrippa. Judæa and Samaria were added, a few years after, to his dominions, by the emperor Claudius, the successor of Caligula; and thus the kingdom of Herod the Great was again united under his grandson.

Herod Agrippa, from the very beginning of his reign, manifested great anxiety to conciliate the feelings and affections of the Jewish people; and he, therefore, sought every opportunity to render his government acceptable to them. He used his influence at Rome to prevent Caligula, when that madman resolved to be worshipped throughout his empire as a god, from causing his image to be placed in the Temple at Jerusalem; and his persecution of the Christians seems to have arisen less from an intolerant disposition, than from a wish to please the Jews. His

increasing power and greatness, however, at length so inflated his mind, that he received, with complaisance, the salutations of the people, who, on a public occasion, hailed him, in the theatre at Cæsarea, as a god. To check his vanity, and to teach him his weakness and mortality, he was immediately smitten by the Almighty with a loathsome disease, of which he soon after died. This event occurred in the fifty-fourth year of Agrippa's age, and 45 A. D.

On the death of Herod Agrippa, Judæa once more became a Roman province, and under the successive governments of Cuspius Fadus, Tiberius Alexander, and Ventidius Cumanus—in all not more than eight years—various acts of tumult, popular frenzy, delusions and crime, clearly indicated the commencement of that troubled condition of society, which ended, in less than twenty years, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the nation. In 53 A. D., the emperor Claudius appointed his freedman, Felix, procurator of Judæa; and from the very commencement of his administration, there was nothing mean, cruel, unjust, or extortionate, to which he did not resort. Such conduct greatly contributed to extend and strengthen that impatience of Roman authority which had long existed, and which soon after rose to madness. Enthusiasts were now constantly starting up, and declaring themselves divinely commissioned to deliver the nation from Roman bondage. The general expectation at this time of such a deliverer, secured followers for the wildest of those impostors; and so numerous were they, that scarcely a day passed in which several of them were not put to death.

The government of Felix at length became so intolerable to the Jews, that they sent a deputation to complain of his conduct to the emperor Nero, who had now succeeded Claudius upon the imperial throne; and in 60 A. D. Felix

was recalled, and the procuratorship conferred upon Porcius Festus. Festus immediately proceeded to act with great boldness against the numerous bands of robbers who now infested every part of the country; and such was his decision and severity towards them, that his conduct spread terror to the very heart of Jerusalem. The bands of robbers being, through his energy, either subdued or scattered, he next turned his attention to the discords which raged between the superior and inferior order of priests. These discords arose out of the frequent changes of the persons who held the office of high-priest, and the extravagant claims of those who had once enjoyed that dignity. The latter, in the course of time, formed a considerable body; and as they all claimed the pontifical portion out of the tithes, there was not sufficient left for the subsistence of the inferior priesthood. The rigor with which the claim was enforced, and the vehemence with which it was resisted, led to the most scandalous outrages. These vile miscreants, as Josephus calls them, engaged partisans, and employed assassins against each other; and not only was the country kept in a continual ferment by them, but the very sanctuary itself was often desecrated by their broils, and stained with their blood. Festus, by his resolute conduct and wholesome severities, succeeded in subduing, in some degree, this disgraceful strife; but his whole administration was greatly troubled by the enthusiasts and false prophets, who, from time to time, appeared, and, by their promised deliverance, excited the multitude to commit the most violent outrages.

In the midst of these praiseworthy labors Festus died, having held the government less than three years. He was succeeded by Albinus, the only object of whose administration seems to have been to enrich himself. His severities were reserved for such worthless wretches as could

produce no money; but the most atrocious criminals, whose wealth would enable them to bribe sufficiently high, were permitted to commit their outrages with impunity. As crime yielded him a rich harvest in bribes and ransoms, he gave it every encouragement, and was regarded as the real head of all the robbers in the country. Bad as Albinus was, however, he was greatly surpassed, both in oppression and cruelty, by Gessius Florus, his successor. Florus was the last, and very worst of the Roman governors of Judæa. Indeed, the enormities of his predecessors, when compared with those which he committed, were as nothing. Other procurators had been tyrannical, cruel, and avaricious; but *his* tyranny knew no bounds, *his* cruelty was a habit, and *his* avarice was utterly insatiable. He protected all robbers who would divide the spoil with him, and thus practically gave a license to all kinds of violence and spoliation. To conceal his own crimes, he now urged on the tendencies of the people to intestine commotion and revolt; and thus hastened the result which their own madness had already rendered inevitable.

Under the mal-administration of Florus, the condition of the country soon became so deplorable, that a great number of the well-disposed inhabitants sought, in foreign countries, that protection which they could not find in their own. The whole land was distracted by tumults: robbery was licensed; justice was sold by the procurator without disguise, and even the sacred office of the high-priesthood was offered to the highest bidder. The office being thus obtained by the most profligate wretches, they used it for their own base purposes, and maintained themselves in it by the darkest villainies. Divided into different sects and parties, of which there were at this time a great number, they, with the leading men of the nation severally attached to them, treated each other with the bitterest sectarian ani-

mosity. Seconded by such examples in their superiors, the ordinary priests and the scribes became, in the highest degree, dissolute and unprincipled: the mass of the people abandoned themselves to every species of vice and crime, and sedition, extortion, and robberies, were matters of every-day occurrence.

While all Judæa was in this deplorable condition, events transpired at Cæsarea which resulted in an actual outbreak. That city was now the seat of the Roman governor, and contained a mixed population of Syrians and Jews, between whom a serious dispute had arisen, as to which of them the place really belonged. The dispute, at length, assumed so serious an aspect, as to be referred to the emperor; and as the decision was in favor of the Syrians, their exultation was boundless; and this greatly exasperated not only the Jews of Cæsarea, but the whole nation. This triumph of the Syrians, together with insults of the Jewish religion, fanned into a flame the smouldering embers of the fire of revolt. Under the impulse of this irritation, a party of hot-headed young men surprised a Roman garrison at Masada, near the Dead Sea, and put all the soldiers to the sword. The conduct of these young men was openly sanctioned at Jerusalem; and the priests accordingly ceased to offer up the usual sacrifices for the prosperity of the Roman empire. In the midst of their frenzy, the popular party in the city rose upon the Roman garrison, put them all to the sword, and then burned the palace and the public offices. A general insurrection was the consequence, and war, massacre, and devastation immediately followed, throughout the land.

Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, on receiving intelligence of this revolt, marched a powerful army into Judæa, and advanced towards Jerusalem; but before he reached the city, he was met by the insurgents, and com-

pletely defeated. The military engines which, as one of the fruits of this victory, fell into the hands of the victors, were effectually used by them in the subsequent defense of the city. The honor of Rome was now engaged to revenge this disgrace; and for this purpose, the emperor Nero sent the able and experienced Vespasian, accompanied by his son Titus, to conduct the war. Vespasian commenced his operations in the spring of 67 A. D., with an army of sixty thousand men; but instead of marching directly to Jerusalem, he first reduced Galilee, and recovered the fortresses that had been taken by the insurgents. This task he found not so easy as he had anticipated; for at every step, his course was resisted with the most desperate valor. At Jotapata, he was opposed by the historian Josephus, to whom the provisional Jewish government had confided the defense of Galilee. The fortress at length fell, and Josephus was taken prisoner; but in consequence of his exalted character, he was treated with great consideration and respect.

The treatment of Josephus was, however, an exception to the general conduct of the Romans throughout the campaign; for in every other instance, they behaved with the greatest severity. No mercy was shown to age or sex; and cities, towns, and villages were cruelly ravaged and destroyed. These desolations, awful as they were, were not confined to Judæa; but in many distant cities in which Jews were settled, they were slaughtered by the Roman soldiers and the other inhabitants in great multitudes. In Cæsarea, twenty thousand were slain in one day; and in Scythopolis, thirteen thousand in one night; in Alexandria in Egypt, fifty thousand; in Joppa, eight thousand; and in Damascus, more than ten thousand. The extent of the destruction of the Jews was not, however, to be wondered at; for nothing but the blindest infatuation could have in-

duced them to rush recklessly into a war where the odds were so fearfully against them.

Though Vespasian steadily prosecuted the war, yet he evinced no haste to march against Jerusalem; for he well knew that the factions which raged in that city were effectually destroying each other. Of these factions, the two principal held possession of different parts of the city; and in the cruel conflicts in which they wasted their strength, they destroyed even the store-houses of corn and other provisions, which formed their only resource against famine, in the threatened siege. Both factions agreed, however, in harassing, plundering, and destroying those citizens and nobles who did not enter into their own views; and hence they were not prepared to avail themselves of the advantages which they might have derived from a respite which, at this time, occurred, occasioned by a revolution in imperial Rome itself, in consequence of the death of Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were successively invested with the purple; and at length, Vespasian himself, with the general approbation of all ranks, was declared emperor, by the army of the east.

The position to which Vespasian was thus unexpectedly raised, required that he should hasten to Rome; and at his departure from Judæa, he committed the conduct of the war to his son Titus. In the following year, at the feast of the Passover, when the city was thronged with people from every part of the land, the Roman army appeared before its walls. The anxiety of Titus to save the city and the Temple, was probably the motive that prompted him to commence the siege at this season; for it was natural to expect that, where such multitudes were shut up in an ill-provisioned city, famine alone would soon make a surrender inevitable. Titus used the most earnest persuasions to induce the besieged to open the gates of the city to his army;

assuring them, with the utmost sincerity, that they might thus secure both their liberty and their safety. He even commissioned Josephus to address them, and to point out to them the folly of supposing that they could successfully resist the power of Rome. All entreaties, warnings, and counsels were, however, treated with scorn; the besieged, confident that God would not permit his Temple and city to fall before the heathen, resolved to defend them to the last extremity.

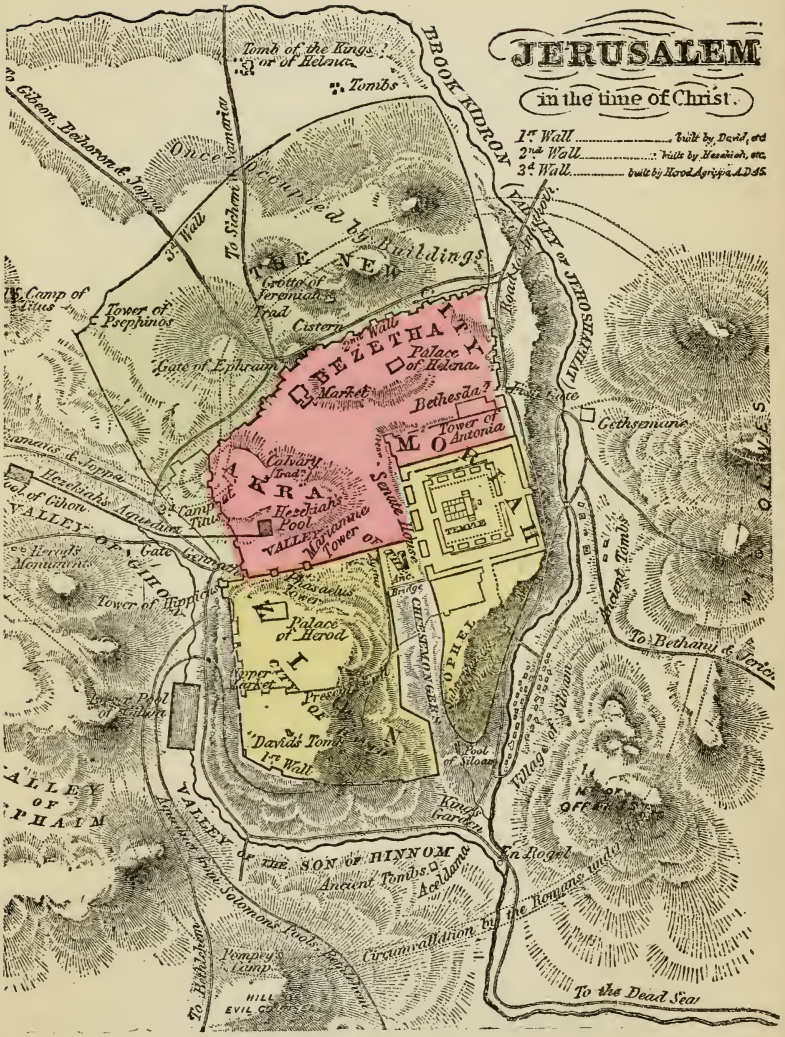
This desperate determination of the infatuated Jews, compelled Titus, much against his own will, to become the unconscious instrument of accomplishing that doom of the city and Temple of Jerusalem, which Christ had, nearly forty years before, so emphatically denounced. The very folly of their resistance, at length so exasperated Titus, that he resolved that none of them should escape but such as surrendered at discretion; and he, therefore, surrounded the city with a strong wall of circumvallation, strengthened by towers. This work the great strength of the city rendered necessary; for the place was not only enclosed by three walls, one within the other, but had, in its midst, the Temple, which was, of itself, an exceedingly strong fortress. All these defenses were successively carried by the Romans, although every step was desperately contested by the besieged, who, for fifteen weeks, prevented their enemies from reaching the Temple.

During the whole of that time the most horrible famine prevailed throughout Jerusalem; and at length it reached such a height that no table was spread in the city, or regular meal eaten: the people bartered their wealth for a measure of corn, and often ate it unground and unbaked, or snatched it, half-baked, from the coals. Under these calamitous circumstances, multitudes perished from mere want, especially the old and the very young; for, to the

latter, the mother's breasts no longer afforded nourishment. There were even many instances of dead infants being eaten by their own parents; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, in relation to this awful event: "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness; her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gate."

The city of Jerusalem itself was taken by the Romans in the early part of May, 70 A. D.; but the Temple did not fall into their hands until the beginning of the following August. Titus was most anxious to spare that splendid edifice, as it was one of the noblest ornaments of the Roman empire; but, as Josephus observes, the holy and beautiful house "was doomed to destruction, and nothing could save it." He even attributes to "a divine impulse," the act of the soldier who seized a burning brand, cast it into the golden window, and thus set the whole fabric in flames. The moment Titus perceived this he hastened to the spot; and as all attempts to save the building itself proved unavailing, he, with some of his officers, entered the sanctuary, and conveyed thence all the sacred utensils and vessels of gold. Many of these he carried to Rome to grace his triumphal procession, and they were afterwards sculptured upon the arch which was constructed to commemorate his victory.

The useless obstinacy evinced by the Jews in their desperate defense of their city and Temple, so exasperated the Romans, that the moment they fell into their hands they burned and destroyed every thing before them without re-


JERUSALEM
in the time of Christ.
1st Wall built by David, etc
2nd Wall built by Hezekiah, etc.
3d Wall built by Herod Agrippa A.D. 45.
Tomb of the Kings ? or of Helena
Tombs
Occupied by Buildings
THE NEW CITY
BEZETHA
Grotto of Jeremiah ?
Tradl
Cistern
Tower of Psephinos
Camp of Titus
Gate of Ephraim
Palace of Helena
Market
Bethesda ?
Tower of Antonia
Sheep Gate
Gethsemane
Calvary Tradl
Hezekiah's Pool
Camp Titus
VALLEY OF GIHON
Gate
Tower of Hippicus
Palace of Herod
Upper Pool
Present City
Lower Pool of Gihon
David's Tomb
1st Wall
Pool of Siloam
Village of Siloam
Ancient Tombs
To Bethany & Jericho
Mount of Offence
Kings Garden
En Rogel
VALLEY OF THE SON OF HINNOM
Ancient Tombs
Aceldama
Circumvallation by the Romans under
Pompey's Camp
To the Dead Sea
To Bethlehem
HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL
To Gibeon, Bethoron & Joppa
To Sichem & Samaria
2d Wall
TROOK KIDRON
VALLEY OF KIDRON
Road to BETHANY
Road to JERICHO

morse, and massacred the people without distinction of age or sex. Streams of blood flowed through every street, and the lanes of the city were filled with bodies weltering in their gore. The number that perished during the four months of the siege, is computed at one million one hundred thousand—a number that would seem incredible, did we not recollect that at the time the siege commenced almost the whole nation was assembled in the city to celebrate the Passover. An equal number perished elsewhere during the six years of the war; and ninety-seven thousand were made prisoners and sold into slavery, or sent to toil in the mines of Egypt.

In this calamitous manner Israel ceased to be a nation, and became outcast and desolate; their famous city and beautiful Temple were utterly destroyed; and the doom fulfilled which the people impiously invoked upon themselves when, at the unrighteous condemnation of our Saviour, they cried out: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." It is still a source of consolation, however, to reflect, that, notwithstanding their unparalleled sufferings, "there is hope in the end"—that they are not finally cut off, nor have they fallen beyond recovery; but in accordance with the animating promise of the Almighty, their privileges will again be restored—their covenant blessings renewed; and, in a far higher sense than ever before, JEHOVAH will be their God, and they shall be his people.

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